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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide urges the use of sentence combining as a technique to improve both the reading and the writing of students. The guide offers practical activities in sentence combining in forms that will make classroom teaching more interesting for the instructor and elicit more productive work from the student. The guide is divided into the following six chapters: (1) "The Promise of Sentence Combining"; (2) "Using Sentence Combining in the Classroom"; (3) "Providing Signals: Cued Sentence-Combining Exercises"; (4) "Open Sentence-Combining Exercises: From Sentence to Paragraph to Discourse"; (5) "One Researcher's Sequence: Sentence-Combining Exercises for Elementary Students"; and (6) "A Brief Summary of Research." Contains 52 references and a 47-item annotated bibliography of related resources in ERIC. (NKA)

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Improve Student Reading and Writing

Sentence-Combining Activities for Elementary and Secondary Teachers

by Andrea Jenkinson

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Improve Student Reading and Writing

Sentence-Combining Activities for Elementary and Secondary Teachers

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CHAPTER 1

The Promise of Sentence Combining

Research over the past three decades indicates that sentence-combining exercises (SCE's) can improve students' reading and writing abilities in elementary, secondary and college classrooms. Studies also show that SCE's can be effective for learning-disabled students, for speakers of English as a second language, for adult learners, and for technical and business writers.

What Is Sentence Combining?

What is this sentence-combining strategy that seems to hold so much promise for teachers and students? It is the combining of two or more short, basic sentences (called *kernels*) into a longer, more complex sentence in such a way that the important information from each short sentence is retained. A definition that is frequently quoted or paraphrased in the research literature is that *sentence combining is the process of putting short, choppy sentences together to make more interesting, readable ones.* For example, here are four kernel sentences:

Sarah is president of the senior class.
She is an honor student.
She has applied to six universities.
She has been accepted by four.

These can be combined in at least two ways:

> Having applied to six universities, Sarah, an honor student and president of the senior class, has been accepted by four.
>
> Sarah, an honor student who is president of the senior class, has been accepted by four of the six universities to which she applied.

Sentence combining is not limited to joining short sentences into longer ones; it also encourages students to combine and organize several sentences into a coherent paragraph. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

Merits

For decades, teachers and researchers have debated the merits of instruction in grammar as an aid for improving student writing. Teachers of English who had been directed to use grammar textbooks in their classrooms may have looked askance at the research which indicated that the teaching of grammar has little effect on student writing. But teachers can still find occasional articles in support of formal instruction in syntax. They can also find hundreds of research studies, perhaps less than half of which were reported in journals, on the impact of SCE's on student reading and writing. From 1966 to 1981, ERIC included 194 abstracts on sentence combining in its data base. That number increased to 201 between 1982 and 1991. For the period from 1992 to March of 1996, there were 23 records.

Will interest in and classroom usage of sentence combining continue into the millennium? In all probability, it will. With the inclusion of SCE's in grammar and composition textbooks, with the continued emphasis on process writing, with the encouragement that classroom teachers become

researchers, and with the frequent suggestion that teachers of writing create mini-lessons to correct syntactic and mechanical problems, SCE's are unlikely to disappear from the classroom even though they might not occupy a prominent place in the research literature.

Uses and Diversity

From the very early experiments to the present, SCE's showed promise. In fact, SCE's can be used for different purposes with a variety of students, as the following quotations from research indicate.

- With sentence combining . . . instructors can use grammar to teach writing. Sentence combining exercises enable students to learn about the problems a writer might face in manipulating text and—at the same time—learn about the process a writer goes through in creating text. Studies show that practice with sentence combining makes students better writers. Such an exercise can even be used without reference to any grammatical terminology in a process oriented class. (Morenberg, 1992)

- Sentence combining has been shown to be an effective technique for improving the syntactic skills of student writers at virtually every academic level: elementary, middle school, secondary, and college. Generally, these studies agree on the positive effects of sentence-combining practice—enhanced syntactic fluency and, for the most part, improvement in the overall quality in students' writing. (Lawlor, 1983)

- . . . elementary grade students may profit more than older students from training (such as sentence-combining) designed to enhance their ability to comprehend syntactic structures encountered in their reading. This finding, combined with the positive effect that

sentence-combining is known to have on syntactic fluency in written composition, leads us to recommend that sentence-combining be included in the elementary school's reading/language arts curriculum. (Neville and Searls, 1991)

- While the research clearly indicates that such work [sentence combining] over the course of several weeks results in higher quality, the increased quality may not be due simply to increased complexity. Rather . . . it may provide students with control over an organized repertoire of syntactic structures, control that allows them to pick and choose among a variety of alternative syntactic structures at the verbatim level. Such work may also have a positive effect in revision, enabling students to search more systematically for more appropriate structures. Whatever the case, the research . . . indicates that sentence combining can have a powerful effect on the quality of writing. (Hillocks, 1987)

- Sentence-combining practice can help students improve their writing if it is based on spontaneous, naturally occurring language samples; if it is used only where there is a demonstrable benefit; and if it is designed to steer away from excessive, muddled complexity. (Daiker, 1985)

- Two of the most serious problems facing beginning college writers are insufficient vocabulary and simplistic sentence structures. One way to help remedy both problems is the use of sentence combining to teach vocabulary. I believe that dramatic improvements in diction result, if sentence combining deliberately uses context clues to teach new vocabulary. (Briggs, 1983)

- Certainly sentence combining can be used effectively in reworking a piece of writing . . . I am not offering sentence combining as the panacea for post-writing woes. Instead I wish to use a technique that

the students already know quite well in order to introduce some important concepts with which they are generally unfamiliar. I think that with sentence combining as the vehicle, my students do learn some valuable lessons about recasting their whole essays. (Sommers, 1985)

Positive Observations

Not all researchers and teachers of writing have been positive about the effects of SCE's on student reading and writing. Debates among linguists and rhetoricians have been heated. Claims and counterclaims have bounced through the literature. But the believers, those who have used SCE's successfully, cannot be dissuaded by scholarly debate. As I read articles, books, research reports, and abstracts, I summarized some of the positive observations into the following sentences.

- Students in the elementary school enjoy sentence combining, which is a proven technique for helping them develop versatile sentences.
- The length and complexity of combined sentences do not necessarily reflect mature and improved writing. However, when teachers analyze combined sentences in class discussions, students can recognize well-crafted sentences as opposed to the muddled, awkward constructions.
- Students need not learn grammatical terminology as they combine kernel sentences; however, several researchers have noted that the teaching of such terms makes sense and that students understand and remember them as they perform SCE's.

- SCE's need to be continued regularly over an extended period to bring about improvement in reading and/or writing. Several researchers have suggested that students perform SCE's two or three times a week for at least four weeks. Other researchers have suggested longer periods.

- Students profit more from exercises in which they combine their own sentences rather than from work with ready-made sentences. This point, like the others, is debatable.

- Practice in sentence combining can help students revise their essays.

A Critical Look at Sentence Combining

Opponents of sentence combining offer the following objections, among others, which I have summarized in my own words.

- Sentence combining focuses on the syntactic features of the sentence, not upon rhetorical choices.

- Rearranging ready-made sentences is not writing.

- Sentence combining, if it is practiced in the classroom, must be perceived by students to be ancillary to the writing process, never the focus of the writing course.

- No research has been done on the harmful effects of sentence combining.

- Students at the secondary level show little improvement in reading skills as measured by both standardized and cloze tests.

- SCE's are not the panacea that many teachers and researchers declare them to be.

- Through classroom practice designed to help students write longer, complex sentences, student writers become expert in dumping phrases and clauses together in jumbled, awkward sentences.

The primary focus of this text is classroom practice, not linguistic and rhetorical argument. In an attempt to summarize the research in my own words, I tried to avoid linguistic, rhetorical, and educational jargon whenever possible. My purpose is to report research in readable prose. If in so doing I misconstrued the messages of the scholars, I apologize. Another purpose is to present SCE's that can be used in the classroom. My apologies to the designers of the SCE's for the liberties I have taken in constructing my own exercises, some of which are based on their ideas.

CHAPTER 2

Using Sentence Combining in the Classroom

As educators, and especially as teachers of the English language arts, we strive to help students learn to write, read, listen, and communicate effectively. We dream of helping our students become effective and active participants in our democracy. One way to accomplish this is to sharpen their writing and reading skills, which will improve their analytical ability. Sentence combining can contribute much to the development of reading, writing, and analytical skills.

There are many ways to use sentence combining in the classroom. Although it is not the "end all" to teaching grammar, writing, or reading, it is still a very useful tool. For instance, in the beginning or the middle of class, when you have to take attendance or pass out papers, sentence combining can be used as a way to get students' writing and reading juices flowing. It can be used as the basis for a mini-lesson, and it also serves well as a transition between activities in the classroom. But sentence combining is most useful as an integral part of instruction in the writing and reading processes.

Open Sentence Combining

Research indicates that sentence-combining exercises can improve students' overall writing and reading abilities. Various types of exercises can be used in the classroom. You can create kernel sentences and have students combine them any way they desire as long as they retain the

meanings of the original sentences. In other words, give students the freedom to create their own possible combinations. A method based on this concept, called *open sentence combining*, is discussed in Chapter 4.

Open sentence combing is designed to move students from writing single sentences to paragraphs to discourse. What does that mean? First, students take a group of related sentences and combine them into one. They can experiment and discover for themselves how to combine these sentences in several ways. The only rule is that the meaning of the original sentences must be retained. Second, students take a number of groups of sentences on one topic, combine the closely related groups, and then arrange them in a paragraph. Third, students combine four or more related groups of sentences into paragraphs to produce a discourse.

The Place of Sentence Combining in the Elementary Classroom

Of the many challenges facing elementary teachers, one of the most important is to teach students how to read and write. When teaching grammar and the development of sentences, elementary school teachers can turn to research which has shown that sentence combining is an effective tool in the learning process. However, this approach is not to be used solely to teach syntactic structures. As we show in Chapter 5, it can also be an effective tool in developing reading and writing skills. For example, students who struggle with writing compound sentences and subordinate clauses can benefit from sentence combining-exercises that focus on these sometimes troublesome structures. Students benefit because they can begin to derive meaning behind various sentence combinations; this helps them develop their own reading and writing skills.

Cued Sentences

Another method is to create cued kernel sentences. Such sentences contain an *indicator*, usually in bold type, italics, or all caps. This indicator specifies what is missing from the sentence and lets students know how the sentence should be combined. For example:

Sally went to the (WHERE).
She went to the grocery store. (WHY)
She wanted to buy lettuce and tomatoes.
Combined sentence: Sally went to the grocery store to buy lettuce and tomatoes.

In Chapter 3 we show how cued sentences are used to have students combine sentences for a specific outcome; there are no other possible combinations. However, you can use a sequence of sentence-combining exercises that deals with specific syntactic structures. Sequence sentence combining helps those students who are having difficulties with compounds, coordinates, adverbials, restrictive noun modifiers, noun substitutes, and free modifiers. The advantage of using this type of exercise when teaching grammar is that it shows the functions in action. Having students deal with sentences in a sequence will illustrate how one word can change the meaning of a sentence. Learning how word choice can affect meaning helps students during the writing and editing process. In time, students discover how to manipulate syntactic structures for themselves.

Student-Written Kernels

An effective way to use sentence combining is to have students create their own kernel sentences and give them to their classmates for practice. Sentence combining does not always have to be teacher directed; it can also be used when students are proofreading their classmates' papers. When students do not understand a sentence, they can break it down, evaluate it, and recombine it. You can pull random, awkward sentences from students' papers and have the class decombine them and then recombine them. You might take such sentences from other classes so students do not become self-conscious about their own writing.

Each chapter in this book contains a more in-depth explanation of the various sentence-combining methods. There are many sample exercises throughout the entire book. Although there are suggested grade levels for some of the exercises, the ideas can be used to help students improve their writing and reading comprehension in all grades and in all subjects that require a text. The only way for teachers to achieve the goal of helping students become active participants in our democracy is to ensure that they understand the information we impart to them on a daily basis. The task of instructing is a difficult one. Sentence combining is one of many tools we can use to assist students in discovering the meaning of the "texts" that we use to pass on information and knowledge.

CHAPTER 3

Providing Signals: Cued Sentence-Combining Exercises

John Mellon initiated research in sentence combining in 1964. Working with teachers and 250 seventh-grade students, Mellon designed problems "to be solved in connection with their study of an elementary transformational grammar" (Mellon, 1969). His sentence-combining problems ranged from two sentences that "illustrate particular transform types" to nine sentences that students combined into a single sentence. Two of his simpler problems are given here.

1. *Fact Clause*:

A. SOMETHING seems to suggest SOMETHING.
   Bill finished his lessons in less than an hour. (T:fact)
   He had received special help from another student. (T:fact)

B. The fact that Bill finished his lessons in less than an hour seemed to suggest that he had received special help from another student.

2. *WH-Infinitive Phrase*:

A. The instruction manual did not say SOMETHING.
   Someone overhauls the engine sometime. (T:wh+inf)

B. The instruction manual did not say when to overhaul the engine. (Mellon, 1969, p. 95)

The short sentences to be combined are called "T-units," an abbreviated form which stands for "minimal terminable units." Each T-unit contains a single main clause and any subordinate clauses that may be

attached to it. In the first problem, T-units states a fact. Using the guidelines given by the sentence in part A, the student can combine the two T-units into the sentence given in part B. In the second problem, the T-unit involves a question which cannot be answered simply by *yes* or *no*. Such questions often begin with a *wh-* word such as *who, what, where,* or *when*. This is combined with an infinitive to give the sentence in part B, which hinges on the words "when to overhaul."

The seventh graders who were studying transformational grammar understood Mellon's sentence-combining cues. "During a one-year period, the experimental group significantly increased its syntactic fluency on the twelve factors reported. . . . The absolute growth in the experimental group was approximately double that in the two control groups" (p. v). Yet, in spite of this apparent progress, Mellon had reservations about his study. "A one-year experiment could not determine whether the gains in syntactic fluency would be sustained over several years, and no attempt was made to learn whether the experimental group made more or fewer syntactic errors than the control groups" (p. v).

Mellon's sentence combining-problems accompanied the study of transformational grammar. Later researchers designed sentence-combining exercises without formal grammar instruction.

Frank O'Hare's Cued Exercises

In 1973 the National Council of Teachers of English published Frank O'Hare's *Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing without Formal Grammar Instruction*. In the same year, Random House published William Strong's: *Sentence Combining: A Composing Book*. Both Strong and O'Hare developed sets of signals that served as "place holders," marking the spot where a student should insert a phrase or a sentence. According to the research literature, a number of teachers successfully used the exercises by Strong and by O'Hare for at least a decade.

Three of O'Hare's sample sentence-combining problems serve as a contrast to the problems and grammatical instruction designed by Mellon.

A. SOMETHING should make you avoid him.
   He is an absolute nut. (THE FACT THAT)
B. The fact that he is an absolute nut should make you avoid him.

A. The fish soon discovered SOMETHING.
   The worm was dangling in the water for some reason.
B. The fish soon discovered why the worm was dangling in the water.

A. SOMETHING was difficult.
   Jerome admitted SOMETHING. (IT—FOR—TO)
   He really didn't know SOMETHING. (THAT)
   The problem could be solved somehow. (HOW)
B. It was difficult for Jerome to admit that he really didn't know how the problem could be solved. (O'Hare, 1973, pp. 82, 84)

An analysis of O'Hare's data revealed "that the experimental group wrote compositions which were syntactically different from the compositions written by the control group. The experimental group wrote significantly more clauses and these clauses proved to be significantly longer" (p. 67).

From Cued Sentences to Paragraphs

Eight years after the publications by Strong and by O'Hare, Adrienne S. Escoe wrote "Teaching Sentence Structure and Versatility" (Escoe, 1981). Before demonstrating the use of cued SCE's that progressed from sentence to paragraph, Escoe wrote:

> In the past we have tried to teach sentence structure through grammar exercises. We've introduced students to a baffling array of grammatical terms. We've asked students to underline subjects, predicates, and prepositional phrases. We've had them draw circles around adverbs, adjectives, and conjunctions. In short, we've assigned countless exercises that required students to analyze and dissect sentences. The limitation of this approach is that it doesn't deal with the real act of writing. When you write, you put sentences together. You don't take them apart. (1981, p. 3)

Escoe added that she did not mean to imply that we should not teach grammar. Rather, she wrote that what is needed is an applied grammar, "a grammar that does not get bogged down in technical terms. We need a practical means for showing students how to construct—not dissect—sentences. At the same time, we also need a technique that teaches students to use the rich variety of sentence structures that is available in the English language . . . Sentence combining teaches both sound sentence structure and versatility" (Escoe, 1981, p. 3).

Escoe emphasized that although sentence combining is an effective technique "for teaching sentence structure and versatility, it is *not* a complete program for teaching writing." Nevertheless, she suggested that sentence-combining practice should be scheduled on a daily basis, taking not more than fifteen minutes each day. She noted that teachers could use several sentence-combining textbooks for their exercises, or they could design their own. She also suggested adapting exercises from literature,

magazines, newspapers, textbooks used in science and history, and student compositions (p. 5).

Escoe noted that students should be successful when they work with sentence combining. "The technique can be introduced with simple two sentence exercises, gradually working up to longer problems. Then several exercises can be combined into a short paragraph so that students can explore the logical relationships among sentences" (p. 5). Escoe offered the following exercise for paragraph building.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS

Crispus Attucks was a sailor.
The sailor was *Black*.
The sailor was *American*.
The sailor lived in Boston in 1770. (who)

One day Crispus and a crowd of colonists marched toward some soldiers.
The colonists were *angry*.
The soldiers were *British*.

The soldiers thought SOMETHING.
The colonists were going to attack them. (that)

Suddenly, the soldiers began to fire at the crowd.
The soldiers were *outnumbered*.
The crowd was *hostile*.

The shooting had stopped. (When)
Crispus Attucks lay dead on the ground.

The Crispus Attucks Paragraph

Crispus Attucks was a Black American sailor who lived in Boston in 1770. One day, Crispus and a crowd of angry colonists marched toward some British soldiers. The soldiers thought that the colonists were going to attack them. Suddenly, the outnumbered soldiers began to fire at the hostile crowd. When the shooting had stopped, Crispus Attucks lay dead on the ground. (Escoe, 1981, p. 6)

Story Starters

Escoe believes that paragraph-length exercises can be used as story starters and that students can write additional paragraphs of their own to complete the story. She notes that not all exercises need to cued. For example, she says that students can write relative clauses without knowing the term *relative clause* after the teacher models several sentences such as the following, which are mine—not Escoe's:

Rita has a German Shepherd.
The German Shepherd is an excellent guard dog.
Combined sentence: Rita has a German Shepherd that is an excellent guard dog.

LuAnn has a beige Labrador.
Its name is Bravo.
It goes to the store with her every day.
Combined sentence: LuAnn has a beige Labrador named Bravo that goes to the store with her every day.

Escoe concluded her article with this paragraph:

> We know that students enjoy sentence combining and that teachers find it easy to use. More important, we know that sentence

> combining is a proven technique for helping students develop versatile sentences. And, most important of all, we know that students who have acquired that distinctive ability to use a rich variety of effective sentence structures are well on their way to becoming good writers. (1981, p. 7)

Cued Exercises and *SC plus*

Cued exercises are still being used. Husnu Enginarlar (1994) noted that they can be used with ESL students, "depending upon the instructional objectives in mind." He noted that both cued and open SCE's are "rather mechanical and limited in scope," but they can be used "to familiarize students with the notion of using subordination" (p. 215). To help ESL students attend to stylistic issues and to avoid falling into errors with subordination, Enginarlar designed *SC plus*.

Put very simply, *SC plus* involves both sentence combining and ordering jumbled sentences. First, students work on combining the members of individual sets of sentences that are given in a mixed order. Then, they put in order the sentences they have created to make a meaningful text. Finally, according to demands of the context, they make choices or adjustments in the sentences they have constructed (p. 218). Enginarlar concludes his introduction to *SC plus* with this caution:

> Despite the impressive research evidenced in favour of traditional SC practice and the added advantages of *SC plus*, the contribution of these exercises in the development of the writing skill should not be exaggerated. Useful as they are, SC and *SC plus* are still basically skill-building and bridging activities which can only play a supporting role within the larger framework of a comprehensive writing curriculum. Hence, they should be used in moderation, and not be considered substitutes for free writing tasks. (1994, pp. 222-223)

Basal Readers and Cued Exercises

D. Ray Reutzel suggested the use of cued exercises based on basal readers (Reutzel, 1986). He observed that most language-arts methods texts encourage teachers to develop their own sentence-combining materials but that they have little time to do so. Therefore, he suggested using basal readers for these reasons: (1) Children's writing is influenced by short, choppy sentences they read in the basals. "Children who saw more natural, syntactically mature language in their reading materials wrote more sophisticated sentences." (2) Basals contain "perfect resource material for sentence combining—short, choppy sentences which can be combined to make more interesting, readable ones" (p. 195).

Reutzel used four sentence-combining techniques: addition, embedding, coordination, and subordination. He offered two examples of each technique, one for primary and another for intermediate grade level. He used sentences from basal readers published by five different companies. What follows is a slight modification of his examples.

ADDITION

Example 1— Primary Grade Level

Cluster: I put on my detective hat.
I took my notebook and pencil.
I put a note where my mother could see it.

Potential writeout: I put on my detective hat, took my notebook and pencil, and put a note where my mother could see it.

Example 2— Intermediate Grade Level

Cluster: Then Jenny gradually pulled the big desk away from the wall.
She looked at the back of the desk.
She smoothed her fingers all around the back.

Potential writeout: Then Jenny gradually pulled the big desk away from the wall, looked at the back of the desk, and smoothed her fingers all around the back.

EMBEDDING

Example 3—Primary Grade Level

Cluster: "Mr. Pond, I saw something *upstairs*."
"It was *in my closet*."
"It was *scary*."

Potential writeout: "Mr. Pond, I saw something *scary upstairs in my closet*."

Example 4—Intermediate Grade Level

Cluster: She had been lying under her knitted coverlet staring up at the ceiling.
It was an *interesting* ceiling.

Potential writeout: She had been lying under her coverlet staring up at the *interesting* ceiling.

COORDINATING

Example 5—Primary Grade Level

Cluster: Louis Braille knew that blind people could feel bumps that were made on paper.
so
He made an alphabet of raised dots that could be read with the fingertips.

Potential writeout: Louis Braille knew that blind people could feel bumps that were made on paper, *so* he made an alphabet of raised dots that could be read with the fingertips.

Example 6—Intermediate Grade Level

Cluster: The hungry snake grew tired of waiting for the bat to fall.
consequently
She crawled away, out the barn door.

Potential writeout: The hungry snake grew tired of waiting for the bat to fall; *consequently* she crawled away, out the barn door.

SUBORDINATING

Example 7—Primary Grade Level

Cluster: Ropes are put around the logs.
after
The logs are put on big trucks.

Potential writeout: *After* ropes are put around the logs, the logs are put on big trucks.

Example 8—Intermediate Grade Level

Cluster: But Tsali and his family did not want to go.
although
They escaped into the high mountains.
where
Later Tsali was killed.

Potential writeout: *Although* Tsali and his family did not want to go, they escaped into the high mountains *where* later Tsali was killed.

COMBINING TWO TECHNIQUES

Example 9—Primary Grade Level

Cluster: Freddy jumped over to the middle of the stage.
where
He took a big, low bow all by himself.
while
The audience clapped hard for a long time.

Potential writeout: Freddy jumped over to the middle of the stage *where* he took a big, low bow all by himself *while* the audience clapped hard for a long time.

Example 10—Intermediate Grade Level

Cluster: Annie turned and ran.
She ran across the sand and huddled in the shallow of the small mesa.
because
Her grandmother would go back to the earth when the rug was taken from the loom.

Potential writeout: Annie turned and ran across the sand and huddled in the shallow of the small mesa because her grandmother would go back to the earth when the rug was taken from the loom. (Reutzel, 1986, pp. 196-98)

Reutzel concludes that teachers can readily use the basal to find sentences to combine and that students increase their reading comprehension through writing about their reading materials. He adds that the use of the basal as a composing book "is intended to complement the traditional components of the language arts curriculum, not supplant it. In short, employing the basal for writing activities makes sense. Using this approach, teachers can more explicitly link reading and writing instruction. As a consequence, children can begin to view reading and writing as complementary, not competing processes" (1986).

Using Cued Exercises in Your Classroom

As I examined the literature on cued SCE's, I concluded that they can be most useful in introducing students to sentence combining. Escoe's use of both key words in italics and place holders in capital letters to lead to the writing of a paragraph prompted me to design several exercises that I found relatively easy to do. Reutzel's suggested sequence can help you

and your students find kernel sentences in basal readers that can help them combine the sentences into more mature combinations and that can also help them improve their reading skills. Nor can I overlook the contributions of Mellon, O'Hare, and Strong. My copy of O'Hare's NCTE research report is from the fifth printing: that fact alone indicates the degree of the impact that O'Hare and other pioneers in sentence combining made on elementary and secondary classrooms.

CHAPTER 4

Open Sentence-Combining Exercises: From Sentence to Paragraph to Discourse

As English teachers, we often ask ourselves how we can move students from writing simple sentences to paragraphs. Open sentence combining is a method that can help students learn to write both mature sentences and well-developed paragraphs. The idea is to start small with simple sentence-combining exercises to enable students to have greater facility with language. Ultimately, they will build stronger exposition while creating a framework in which to write.

Alfred Hitchcock and Open Sentence Combining

1. Her eyes are gray.
2. They reveal her character.
3. They are fearless.

That sentence-combining exercise is not taken from one of the hundreds designed in the last thirty years. According to Shirley K Rose (1983), the three sentences were included in Alfred E. Hitchcock's *Composition and Rhetoric,* first published in 1906. The text contained an exercise with these directions: *Combine each of the following groups of related assertions into a single sentence. Try to make the sentence either simple or complex.*

The following sentences, originally included in Hitchcock's book, are cited by Rose (1983, p. 484). I have added my own possible combinations (**PC**) to each of the exercises. The objective, as stated above, is to combine each of the groups of related statements into one sentence.

EXERCISES IN SENTENCE MUTATION

1. Harry has been invited. Mary has been invited. Ellen has been invited.
PC Harry, Mary, and Ellen have been invited.

2. A nobleman was to marry a princess. His servants were busy. They were preparing a wedding feast.
PC A nobleman's servants were busy preparing a wedding feast because he was to marry a princess.
With the nobleman about to marry a princess, his servants were busy preparing a wedding feast.

3. My den is in the attic. It is a large, airy room. There is little furniture in it. The walls are bare.
PC My den in the attic is a large, airy room with little furniture and bare walls.
My large, airy den in the attic has little furniture and bare walls.

4. The boys had selected a site for the camp. This they had done before I had arrived. It was in a grove of pines. The pines bordered a beautiful sheet of water. The sheet of water is about three miles in circumference.
PC Before I arrived, the boys had selected a site for the camp in a grove of pines bordered by a beautiful sheet of water three miles in circumference.

5. He gave her a ring. This, he said, the King had given him for saving his life.

PC He said that the ring he gave her had been given to him by the King for saving his life.

The ring he gave her, he said, had been given him by the King for saving his life.

6. The skipper was an old man. He liked to spin yarns. His face was brown and wrinkled.

PC The skipper, an old man with a brown, wrinkled face, liked to spin yarns.

A spinner of yarns, the skipper was an old man with a brown, wrinkled face.

7. John Bright became an excellent speaker. He also became an excellent writer. This he accomplished by studying the best English authors.

PC By studying the best English authors, John Bright became an excellent speaker and writer.

John Bright became an excellent speaker and writer because he studied the best English authors.

8. Her eyes are gray. They reveal her character. They are fearless.

PC Her fearless, gray eyes reveal her character.

Her eyes are fearless and gray, revealing her character.

Her eyes, fearless and gray, reveal her character.

Complex, Compound, or Simple

In *Elementary English Composition*, first published in 1900, Fred Newton Scott and Joseph Villiers Denney included the following exercises under the heading, "Writing of Sentences" (Scott, 1900). The objective is to write a news item that consists of a single sentence derived from facts given in kernel sentences. After the sentence is written, the writer is to determine what type of sentence they have written, simple or complex.

Objectives

1. Students learn to combine facts from kernel sentences into a news item in one sentence.
2. Students discover the meaning of complex, compound, and simple sentences.

Activities

The following exercises, originally given in Scott and Denney, are included in Rose's article (1983, p. 484).

1. Write a news item of one sentence embodying the following facts:

   A boy was hurt this morning. He was ten years old. His name is Arthur Smith. He is the son of Amos Smith, the well-known merchant. He was not fatally hurt, but was very seriously hurt. He fell from an apple tree in his father's yard. The Smiths live at 246 Washington Street.

Possible Combinations

Ten-year-old Arthur Smith, the son of well-known merchant Amos Smith who lives at 246 Washington Street, was seriously injured this morning when he fell from an apple tree in his father's yard.

Seriously injured this morning when he fell from an apple tree in his father's yard, ten-year-old Arthur Smith is the son of Amos Smith, the well-known merchant who lives at 246 Washington Street.

What kind of sentences have been written—simple, complex, or compound? In the preceding examples, each of the possible combinations is a complex sentence.

2. Put into two sentences, as if for a news item, the following facts:

There will be no school Friday afternoon. The School Board decided this at its last meeting, which occurred Monday evening. The reason is that the President of the United States will pass through the town on Friday afternoon. The President's train will stop ten minutes at the station and the President will speak from the rear platform of his car to the school children.

Possible Combination

At its meeting Monday evening, the School Board decided that there will be no school Friday afternoon because the President of the United States will pass through the town then. When the train stops at the station for ten minutes, the President will speak from the rear platform of his car to the school children.

Once again, both sentences are complex.

Dionysius, Word Arrangement, and Discourse

In her 1983 article "Down from the haymow: One hundred years of sentence-combining," Shirley Rose included a sentence-combining exercise from John Genung's *Outline of Rhetoric* (1894). Genung's book proves that sentence-combining exercises have been assigned to students for more than one hundred years—probably nearly two thousand years. Rose speculates that sentence combining could probably be traced back to Quintilian, the first-century rhetorician. In fact, Quintilian's attention to *dispositio*, which may be translated as disposition, arrangement, or organization, unquestionably led to his students' working with sentences to express arguments with clarity and eloquence, reflecting the "good man skilled in speaking." But even before Quintilian, the Greek rhetorician Dionysius, who taught in Rome, "made schoolboys aware of the inherent beauty of words and of the possibility of producing pleasing effects even with ordinary words if they were skillfully arranged" (Corbett, 1965).

It is interesting to note that most of the SCE's I have examined are not merely drills in syntactics, as some critics claim; rather, purpose, audience, and rhetorical devices figure prominently in the creation and discussion of combined sentences.

From Simple Combinations to Paragraph to Discourse

In the SCE's that follow, I attempt to develop a sequence that progresses from simple combinations to paragraph to discourse. As I made the possible combinations I constantly asked myself these questions:

- What are the syntactical possibilities?
- How will my attempts at coordination and subordination affect the

meaning inherent in the original sentences that I am attempting to combine?

- How can I best arrange the information?
- How will any changes in diction from the original sentences affect the meaning of those sentences?
- What impact will my syntactical arrangements have on my readers?
- For whom am I writing? Why?
- What difference does my choice of audience make as I attempt to combine two sentences into one, a number of sentences into a paragraph, or several dozen sentences into discourse?

I created the following examples to test the questions I asked. I started with simple combinations and moved to short paragraphs and then to discourse. I started with kernels in each section and also included the possible combinations. The examples increase in complexity from junior high to high school level.

Objectives

1. Students create short paragraphs from combining kernel sentences.
2. Students discover that one word can change the meaning of an entire sentence.
3. Students discover how kernel sentences can be combined to make one fluid sentence.

Simple Combinations

The jeweler made a ring.
The ring has a big emerald
It has twelve tiny diamonds.
The diamonds surround the emerald.

PC The jeweler made a ring with a big emerald surrounded by twelve tiny diamonds.

Made by a jeweler, the ring has a big emerald surrounded by twelve tiny diamonds.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The Wilsons hiked in the Adirondack Mountains.
The Adirondacks are in New York.
The Wilsons met the Greens
The Greens live in Massachusetts.

PC Hiking in the Adirondack Mountains in New York, the Wilsons met the Greens, who live in Massachusetts.

The Wilsons hiked in the Adirondack Mountains in New York and met the Greens from Massachusetts.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The rains soaked the fields.
The rains were heavy.
The rains came in April and May.
The farmers could not plant corn.
The farmers could not plant soybeans.
The farmers were unhappy.

PC The heavy rains in April and May soaked the fields; therefore, the unhappy farmers could not plant corn and soybeans.

Soaking the fields, heavy rains in April and May prevented the unhappy farmers from planting corn and soybeans.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Charles teaches mathematics.
He is a popular instructor.
His students voted him teacher of the year.
He teaches in a middle school.
The middle school is in Carbondale.
Carbondale is in Illinois.

PC Charles, a popular instructor whose students voted him teacher of the year, teaches in a middle school in Carbondale, Illinois.
The students in a middle school in Carbondale, Illinois voted Charles, a popular teacher of mathematics, teacher of the year.

Objective

Students discover how to make meaningful paragraphs from a group of related short sentences.

Short Paragraphs

Driving on long trips can be physically exhausting.
Driving on long trips can be mentally exhausting.
Drivers must sit in the same position.
They use the same muscles.
They must take breaks.
They must exercise their muscles.
They must relax their minds.
On the breaks, they need to think about other things.
They must concentrate on the road.
The road can become monotonous.
The miles of monotonous road can lull drivers to sleep.

PC Driving on long trips can be physically and mentally exhausting because drivers must sit in the same position, use the same muscles, and concentrate on the monotonous road; therefore, they must take breaks to exercise their muscles, to relax their minds, and to think about other things.

Sitting in the same position, using the same muscles, and concentrating on a monotonous road, drivers on long trips can become physically and mentally exhausted. Consequently, they must take breaks to exercise their muscles, relax their minds, and think about other things.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Carla likes to travel.
She travels only by car.
She is afraid to fly.
She is bored by trains.
She thinks ships will sink.
She has been to forty-eight states.
She may visit Alaska.
She can get there by car.
She will probably never visit Hawaii.
She can only get to Hawaii by ship or airplane.

PC Carla likes to travel only by car, being afraid to fly, bored by trains and convinced that ships will sink. Having been to forty-eight states, she may visit Alaska since she can get there by car. But she will probably never visit Hawaii since she can get there only by ship or airplane.

Afraid to fly, bored by trains, and convinced that ships will sink, Carla travels only by car. Having been to forty-eight states, she will probably never visit Hawaii since she can get there only by ship or airplane. But she may visit Alaska since she can get there by car.

Judy Blume writes books.
She writes for young people.
She writes about their problems.
Their problems stem from growing up.
She uses language young people understand.
Her books are very popular.
Some parents do not like *Forever* and *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret.*
They say children should not read them.
They say her language is bad for children.
They try to keep her books out of classrooms.
They protest her books at school board meetings.
They are very angry.
Sometimes they disrupt board business.

PC Using language young people understand, Judy Blume writes very popular books about problems that stem from growing up. Saying that children should not read books like *Forever* and *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* because the language is bad for them, some very angry parents try to keep her books out of classrooms by protesting the books at school board meetings and sometimes disrupting board business.

Writing about problems that stem from growing up, Judy Blume writes very popular books for young people in language they understand. But some very angry parents say that children should not read books like *Forever* and *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* because the language is bad for them. Sometimes disrupting school board business, the parents try to keep Blume's books out of classrooms by protesting the books at board meetings.

Objectives

1. Students discover how to make meaningful paragraphs from short sentences.
2. Students create a meaningful discourse from a group of related paragraphs.

Discourse

Five articles on the World Wide Web provided information for the kernel sentences that follow. First, I will list the kernel sentences that I created as I read the articles. I also jotted down kernel sentences from television broadcasts. Then I will include the five-paragraph theme (discourse) I wrote from the kernel sentences. I did not always follow the order of the kernel sentences as I wrote the theme.

Terrorists bombed the World Trade Center.
It is in New York City.
It was bombed in February of 1993.
It was a destructive act.
It struck fear in the hearts of millions of Americans.
A blast destroyed a Federal building in Oklahoma City.
That blast was in 1995.
It angered and saddened even more millions.

Terrorists parked a truck filled with explosives.
They parked it outside a fence.
The fence was in front of an apartment building.
U.S. armed forces lived in the building.
The building is in Saudi Arabia.
Many died or were injured.

President Clinton called for legislation to detect and punish terrorists.
He did so after the World Trade Center bombing.
The Center for National Security Studies is concerned about terrorist legislation.
They said it would erode constitutional and statutory due process protections.
It would authorize the Justice Department to pick and choose crimes to investigate and prosecute.
It would loosen the rules governing wiretaps.
It would establish special courts that could use secret evidence.
The courts could order the deportation of persons convicted of no crimes.
This would violate basic principles of due process.
It would give the President unreviewable power to criminalize fund-raising for unpopular causes.
The funds could even be for lawful activities.

What is terrorism?
What motivates terrorists to kill?
Steven Metz studies terrorist acts.
He is a professor.
Terrorism is premeditated.
Terrorism is politically motivated violence.
Terrorism is perpetrated against noncombatant targets.
Terrorism is usually intended to influence audiences.
Terrorism is committed by sub-national groups.
Terrorism frequently is the symptom of the oppression of a minority group within a nation.
Terrorism can be committed by clandestine agents.

It is not clear what motivated the destruction and massacre in Oklahoma City.
Two men are suspected in the bombing.

President Clinton wants stronger measures to deal with terrorists.
So does Congress.
They want to deter terrorist activity.
Many citizens will applaud such legislation.
Others will express outrage.
They will say that such legislation erodes constitutional rights.
Most people wants steps to be taken.
They want to deter terrorists.
They want to punish terrorists.

Sample Paragraphs

Terrorists Kill the Innocent

Terrorists bombed the World Trade Center in New York City in February of 1993. That destructive act struck fear in the hearts of millions of Americans. But the blast that destroyed a Federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 angered and saddened even more millions. Then terrorists parked a truck filled with explosives outside the fence near the apartments where U.S. armed forces in Saudi Arabia were quartered. Many died or were injured. Americans expressed outrage.

Americans have asked themselves: What is terrorism? What motivates terrorists to kill? According to Steven Metz, a professor who studies terrorist acts, "Terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. Terrorism is frequently the symptom of the oppression of a minority group within a nation." It is still not clear what motivated the two men suspected of the destruction and massacre in Oklahoma City.

After the World Trade Center bombing, President Clinton called for legislation to detect and punish terrorists. According to the Center for National Security studies, that legislation would erode constitutional and statutory due process protections. Among other things, it would authorize the Justice Department to pick and choose crimes to investigate and prosecute; loosen the rules governing wiretaps; establish special courts that could use secret evidence to order the deportation of persons convicted of no crimes, in violation of basic principles of due process; and give the President unreviewable power to criminalize fund-raising for lawful activities associated with unpopular causes.

It is likely that the President and Congress will call for even stronger measures. Although many citizens will undoubtedly applaud strong legislation, others will express outrage at the erosion of constitutional rights. Regardless of the outcries, most people will agree that every step must be taken to deter terrorist acts and to punish the terrorists.

The Potential of Sentence Combining

As I experimented with open sentence-combining exercises, I considered the many ways that I could use them in my classroom. My mind raced across a whole new landscape, and I concluded that sentence combining does, indeed, have great potential for improving student writing, reading, and thinking skills.

CHAPTER 5

One Researcher's Sequence: Sentence-Combining Exercises for Elementary Students

Several researchers have suggested that the most effective sentence-combining exercises (SCE) are those that use sentences from students' own writing or sentences created in class specifically for the SCE's. However, most of the sentence-combining research projects that I examined employed teacher or researcher-made sentences that students combined. In the exercises below, I provide sample sentences for SCEs to improve elementary students' writing of simple, compound, and complex sentences. I know you will change the examples according to your classroom situation. Also, you may have students create their own kernel sentences to be combined, or draw on examples from their own writing, or select series of sentences from basal readers or other books.

The following sequence of exercises is based *in part* on the work of Joseph Lawlor (1982), who was concerned with these syntactic structures: coordinates, adverbials, restrictive noun modifiers, noun substitutes, and free modifiers. In the summary of "Sentence Combining: A Sequence for Instruction" he wrote what several other researchers have paraphrased:

> Sentence-combining practice can help students develop the syntactic skills they need to produce clear, lively prose. However, effective writing instruction must certainly include guidance with other aspects of the composing process, such as generating and

> arranging ideas, and revising and editing text. Consequently, sentence-combining practice should be considered as an important component—but not the only component—of a comprehensive writing program. (Lawlor, 1983)

The appropriate sequence for sentence-combining activities has received little attention from researchers and instructional designers. In proposing such a sequence here, I am not suggesting that sentence combining must be bound in some rigid, unyielding instructional sequence. Certainly more research is needed, and, as our knowledge of language development increases, the sequence for sentence-combining instruction must be modified (p. 60).

Sample Exercises

The exercises that follow can be adapted for any grade level in elementary school. However, students *at any level or at any age* who need help with compounding or with writing adverbial, relative (adjectival), and noun clauses could profit from these exercises. It is not necessary to use grammatical terms; however, as noted by researchers, sentence combining is an excellent way to teach grammatical terms and syntactic structures. (Please note: The sample sentences are mine, not Lawlor's.)

For this sequence, I have provided instructional objectives that you may wish to modify for your students. For all the exercises, the overriding objective is to have students sharpen their reading and writing skills by performing SCEs created by the teacher or by students.

Objectives

1. Students join two or more subjects to form compound subjects; they join two or more verbs to form compound verbs; and they join two or more predicate adjectives, predicative nominatives (subject complements), or direct objects to form compound predicate adjectives, predicate nominatives, and direct objects.

2. Students combine two or more sentences into a single sentence using a word such as *and, or, nor, but, yet, so* or a semicolon. After they join the pairs or trios into compound sentences, students may want to experiment with other combinations such as adverbial, relative, and noun clauses, without their even knowing those terms. They should be encouraged to do so. Some of the sentence sets below readily lend themselves to combinations with dependent clauses. (Possible combinations containing compounds are noted with **PC**. Other possible combinations are noted with **OPC**.)

Exercises: Compound Subjects

Mark wanted to see the Chicago Cubs play the Los Angeles Dodgers.
Nick wanted to see the Chicago Cubs play the Los Angeles Dodgers.
PC Mark and Nick wanted to see the Chicago Cubs play the Los Angeles Dodgers.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Audrey went to the movies.
Susan went to the movies.
PC Audrey and Susan went to the movies.

The pretty little girl played in the park.
Her handsome brother played in the park.
Their fun-loving cousin played in the park.

PC The pretty little girl, her handsome brother, and their fun-loving cousin played in the park.

Compound Verbs

I finished washing the dishes.
I went to bed.

PC I finished washing the dishes and went to bed.

OPC After I finished washing the dishes, I went to bed.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Marcie caught the ball
Marcie threw it to first base.

PC Marcie caught the ball and threw it to first base.

OPC After Marcie caught the ball, she threw it to first base.
Having caught the ball, Marcie threw it to first base.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

My grandfather drove to Indianapolis.
My grandfather visited three automobile showrooms.
My grandfather bought a car at the third one.

PC My grandfather drove to Indianapolis, visited three automobile showrooms, and bought a car at the third one.

OPC After driving to Indianapolis, my grandfather visited three automobile showrooms and bought a car at the third one.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The big jet roared down the runway.
The big jet took off.
The big jet disappeared in the clouds.

PC The big jet roared down the runway, took off, and disappeared in the clouds.

OPC Roaring down the runway, the big jet took off and disappeared in the clouds.

After it roared down the runway, the big jet took off and disappeared in the clouds.

Compound Predicate Adjectives and Predicate Nominatives (Subject Complements)

Ellen is a music teacher.
Ellen is a concert pianist.

PC Ellen is a music teacher and a concert pianist.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Michael Jordan is a guard for the Chicago Bulls.
Michael Jordan is an all-star.

PC Michael Jordan is a guard for the Chicago Bulls and an all-star.

OPC Michael Jordan, an all-star, is a guard for the Chicago Bulls.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Terry's apartment is rather small.
Terry's apartment is very comfortable.

PC Terry's apartment is rather small but very comfortable.

OPC Although small, Terry's apartment is very comfortable.

The lady governor of the state is very intelligent.
The lady governor of the state is popular with men and women voters.

PC The lady governor of the state is very intelligent and popular with men and women voters.

OPC A very intelligent lady, the governor of the state is popular with men and women voters.

Compound Direct Objects

The talented musician can play the piano.
The talented musician can play the violin.

PC The talented musician can play the piano and violin.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The shifty quarterback faked a pass to the tight end.
The shifty quarterback threw the ball to the halfback.

PC The shifty quarterback faked a pass to the tight end and threw the ball to the halfback.

OPC After he faked a pass to the tight end, the shifty quarterback threw the ball to the halfback.

Faking a pass to the tight end, the shifty quarterback threw the ball to the halfback.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

My little brother wanted a watch for his birthday.
My little brother wanted a Super Nintendo game for his birthday.
My little brother wanted two comic books for his birthday.

PC My little brother wanted a watch, a Super Nintendo game, and two comic books for his birthday.

Compound Sentences

Jodie weeded the garden.
Jeremy watered the flowers.

PC Jodie weeded the garden and Jeremy watered the flowers.
Jodie weeded the garden, but Jeremy watered the flowers.
Jodie weeded the garden; Jeremy watered the flowers.
Jodie weeded the garden, so Jeremy watered the flowers.

OPC While Jodie weeded the garden, Jeremy watered the flowers.
After Jodie weeded the garden, Jeremy watered the flowers.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The kitten did not touch the food in the dish.
The mother cat ate some of it.

PC The kitten did not touch the food in the dish, but the mother cat ate some of it.
The kitten did not touch the food in the dish, so the mother cat ate some of it.

OPC The kitten did not touch the food in the dish; however, the mother cat ate some of it.
The kitten did not touch the food in the dish; consequently, the mother cat ate some of it.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Serena wrote a book
It was published in New York City.

PC Serena wrote a book; it was published in New York City.
Serena wrote a book and it was published in New York City.

OPC Serena wrote a book that was published in New York City.

Goldilocks ate the porridge.
She fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed.
The three bears found her.

PC Goldilocks ate the porridge, she fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed, and the three bears found her.

OPC After Goldilocks ate the porridge, she fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed and the three bears found her.

Having eaten the porridge, Goldilocks fell asleep in Baby Bear's bed, where the three bears found her.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Charlie Brown is the pitcher.
Lucie plays in the outfield.
Snoopy plays first base.

PC Charlie Brown is the pitcher, Lucie plays in the outfield, and Snoopy plays first base.

Charlie Brown is the pitcher; Lucie plays in the outfield; Snoopy plays first base.

OPC While Charlie Brown is the pitcher, Lucie plays in the outfield and Snoopy plays first base. (Students should note the difference in meaning in this sentence: that it is only *while* Charlie Brown is the pitcher that Lucie and Snoopy play specific positions.)

Subordinate (Dependent) Clauses

Students begin subordinating ideas shortly after they learn to talk. Examples include sentences such as "After we go to church, I want ice cream" or "I don't want to go to grandma's 'cause I don't like her dog."

Subordination in the form of adverbial clauses plays a vital role in our written and spoken language. Subordinate (adverbial) clauses are introduced by these words, among others: *after, although, as, as soon as, because, before, if, since, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever,* and *while.*

Subordinate clauses are also called dependent clauses. There are two additional forms of dependent clauses: noun and relative (adjectival).

Noun clauses:

She said *that she would stay in Chicago until Sunday.*

What happened to TWA 800 remains a mystery.

Relative clauses:

The student *who plagiarized his thesis* has transferred to another university.

President Carter, *who served only one term,* is now active with Habitat for Humanity.

In the exercises below, students will form dependent clauses by combining two or more kernel sentences. After providing sample

sentences students can combine by creating dependent clauses, you may want them to create their own sentences and then combine them.

Objectives

1. Students combine two sentences by subordinating one of the two as an adverbial clause.
2. Given sets of sentences, students combine them by creating dependent clauses, either noun or relative.
3. Students distinguish between restrictive and nonrestrictive relative clauses.
4. Students discover how to punctuate subordinate and nonrestrictive clauses.
5. Students create their own kernel sentences to combine themselves or to have their classmates combine them.

Adverbial Clauses

In each of the sets of sentences that follow, the possible combination(s) (PC) will contain an adverbial clause. As students combine kernel sentences by creating adverbial clauses, you may want them to decide how the sentences should be punctuated after you have provided several examples.

Roger finished the test
The bell rang.
PC Roger finished the test before the bell rang.
Roger finished the test as the bell rang.
Before the bell rang, Roger finished the test.
As the bell rang, Roger finished the test.

Although each PC contains an adverbial clause, the Other Possible Combinations (OPC) may contain a different structure. In the next example, the OPC contains a nominative absolute.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The class was over.
We went to the library.
PC After the class was over, we went to the library.
We went to the library after the class was over.
OPC The class being over, we went to the library.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

S.E. Hinton wrote *The Outsiders*.
She was only eighteen.
PC S.E. Hinton wrote *The Outsiders* when she was only eighteen.
OPC Even though she was only eighteen, S.E. Hinton wrote *The Outsiders*.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

They were very hungry.
They went to a fast-food restaurant for lunch.
PC Because they were hungry, they went to a fast-food restaurant for lunch.
They went to a fast-food restaurant for lunch because they were very hungry.
OPC Being very hungry, they went to a fast-food restaurant for lunch.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Your letter arrives today.
I will call you this evening.

PC If your letter arrives today, I will call you this evening.
I will call you this evening if your letter arrives today.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The sun was shining.
The air was very cool.

PC Although the sun was shining, the air was very cool.
The air was very cool even though the sun was shining.

Relative Clauses

A relative clause modifies a word in the independent (main) clause. Relative clauses are usually introduced by *who, whom, whose, which* or *that*. (The relative pronouns *whom* and *that* are frequently left out of a relative clause.) A relative clause may either follow or interrupt the main clause, depending on the position of the word it modifies.

When a relative clause singles out one specific person, thing, or idea, it is said to be *restrictive*. No punctuation is needed to set it off from the main clause. Examples:

The wind capsized the rowboat *that drifted into the middle of the lake*.

The idea [that] *you presented to the class* needs to be analyzed thoroughly before it is adopted.

The witness [whom] *the killer had threatened* fled to Europe.

When a relative clause does not single out a person, place, thing, or idea but merely adds information or details, we call it *nonrestrictive*. We use a comma or commas to set it off from the rest of the sentence. Examples:

Mary King, *who was named Mother of the Year by the local newspaper*, has four daughters and three sons.

Larry received a warning from Mr. Wysnezki, *who is the vice-principal in charge of discipline*.

Exercises

I enjoyed the science fiction novel.
You gave it to me.
PC I enjoyed the science fiction novel that you gave me.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

We met Helen Simmons.
Her son is famous.
He is a tennis star.
PC We met Helen Simmons, whose son is a famous tennis star.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Ellie Sommers is a first baseman.
She has hit twelve home runs so far this season.
Her nickname is Cruncher.
PC Ellie Sommers, whose nickname is Cruncher, is a first baseman who hit twelve home runs so far this season.
OPC A first baseman whose nickname is Cruncher, Ellie Sommers has hit twelve home runs so far this season.

Noun Clauses

Unlike adverbial and relative clauses, noun clauses are not joined to the independent (main) clause. Rather, they replace one of the nouns in the independent clause. Noun clauses frequently begin with *who, what, where, why, how,* and *that.* Examples:

Reporters wondered *why the mayor of Oakdale resigned.*

Erin said *that she was too tired to run for office again.*

How the Bulldogs won the game in the last second was a frequent topic of discussion on Monday.

Exercises

The new silverware was damaged in shipment.
It is very disappointing.
PC That the new silverware was damaged in shipment is very disappointing.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Bob said it.
"We must find ways to end terrorism."
PC Bob said, "We must find ways to end terrorism."

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

You did not want to go to the movies with her.
Mary thought.

PC Mary thought that you did not want to go to the movies with her.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The solution to the snow problem is WHAT.
The school year will be extended by six days.

PC The solution to the snow problem is that the school year will be extended by six days.

Free Modifiers

Lawlor lists these constructions as free modifiers: nonrestrictive relative clauses, nonrestrictive appositive phrases, participial phrases, adjective clusters, certain prepositional phrases, and nominative absolutes. One identifying characteristic is that they are set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma or commas.

I chose to treat nonrestrictive relative clauses under dependent clauses; therefore, I will not repeat that construction here. I also chose not to include an exercise for prepositional phrases as free modifiers.

Examples of Free Modifiers

Nonrestrictive appositive phrase:

Alice Johnson, *the owner of The Bun's Companion*, serves "gourmet hamburgers" in her restaurant.

Participial phrase:

Scoring the tie-breaking goal with only a minute to play, Kris won

the state championship in soccer for her team with her third hat trick of the season.

Adjective cluster:

Jeffrey, *witty but sarcastic,* irritates both teachers and classmates.

Nominate absolute:

The bus having been stuck in a snowdrift, we missed two of our morning classes.

Objectives

1. Given sets of sentences, students combine them by using free modifiers.
2. Students discover how to punctuate sentences that contain free modifiers.
3. Students create their own sentences that they can combine by using free modifiers.

Exercises

The president of the bank spoke to the women's club.
Anne Ball is president of the bank.

PC Anne Ball, the president of the bank, spoke to the women's club.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

George Smith walked to the podium.
He spoke briefly to the large audience.
He introduced Harriet Brown.
Harriet Brown is the author of four best-selling novels.

PC Walking to the podium, George Smith spoke briefly to the audience

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before introducing Harriet Brown, the author of four best-selling novels.

After walking to the podium and speaking briefly to the audience, George Smith introduced Harriet Brown, the author of four best-selling novels.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Archie stood on the back porch.
He was watching the hummingbirds at the feeder.

PC Archie stood on the back porch, watching the hummingbirds at the feeder.

Standing on the back porch, Archie watched the hummingbirds at the feeder.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The rain stopped.
We hurried to the store.

PC The rain having stopped, we hurried to the store.

We hurried to the store, the rain having stopped.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The audience gave her a standing ovation.
The soprano sang three encores.

PC The audience having given her a standing ovation, the soprano sang three encores.

The soprano sang three encores, the audience having given her a standing ovation.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Karen is honest.
Karen is outspoken.
She refused to write a term paper a classmate.
She spoke loudly.

PC Karen, honest and outspoken, loudly refused to write a term paper for her classmate.

Speaking loudly, Karen, honest and outspoken, refused to write a term paper for her classmate.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The baglady was cold.
The baglady was weary.
She wanted to spend the night in the shelter for the homeless.

PC The baglady, cold and weary, wanted to spend the night in the shelter for the homeless.

Some Thoughts on the Sequence

As I created sentences to be combined for the constructions in Lawlor's sequence, I discovered that I occasionally needed to examine several handbooks to make certain that I understood the syntactic terms. I have had relatively little instruction in grammar; however, the examples Lawlor provided frequently allowed me to write sample sentences without worrying about the grammatical terms. Thus I proved to myself what researchers have written time and time again: sentence combining does not require instruction in grammar. But it doesn't hurt. I often regret not being able to name certain grammatical constructions and define them. As I teach, I discover that I need to know much more about grammar than I do now. My adult students who are speakers of English as a second language insist that I tell them the names of syntactic structures.

I also learned that Lawlor's sequence reinforced what I thought I knew about the punctuation of certain constructions. So working on a series of exercises helped me as a writer, a reader, and a teacher.

CHAPTER 6

A Brief Summary of Research

Sentence combining is not new. One writer found sentence-combining exercises (SCE's) in an 1894 textbook on rhetoric (Rose, 1983). But a century ago is far from the beginning of classroom exercises to improve the writing of sentences. A thorough analysis of rhetoric from Dionysius, who taught in Rome from 30 to 8 B.C., to the first-century rhetorician Quintilian to the present would demonstrate that SCE's, in one form or another, have been recommended to students for nearly two thousand years. However, contemporary sentence combining, as we know it, has its roots in the generative-transformational theory of grammar as developed by Noam Chomsky, not in the rhetoric of Quintilian or the teaching of Dionysius. One of Chomsky's transformation rules involved the embedding of one or more structures into a kernel sentence. This process led O'Donnel, Griffin, and Norris to refer to such operations as sentence-combining transformations (Neville and Searls, 1985).

The "T-unit"

Although Chomsky provided the theoretical base for sentence combining, it was Kellogg Hunt who provided the basis for experimentation in sentence combining with his invention of the "T-unit." He defined the "T-unit" as "one main clause plus the subordinate clauses attached to or embedded within it" (Hunt, 1965). After his study of the writing of students between grades four and twelve, Hunt noted that older writers used more transformations per T-unit and had a larger repertoire of transformations than did younger writers. Shortly after Hunt's study, John Mellon (1969) explored the effects of sentence-combining practice on

seventh graders in English class. In his study, classroom teachers worked with 250 seventh graders, combining instruction in transformational grammar with SCE's. His experimental group "significantly increased its syntactic fluency. . . . The absolute growth in the experimental group was approximately double that in the two control groups" (Mellon, 1969).

Kernel Sentences

Frank O'Hare (1973) avoided the use of transformational rules and experimented with SCE's in which he gave students two kernel sentences with signals as to how to combine them. For example:

I arrived in Brussels.
I saw an endless parade of bicycles. (when)
Combined sentence: When I arrived in Brussels, I saw an endless parade of bicycles.

Both O'Hare and William Strong paved the way for the multitude of studies that followed. But from its very beginning, sentence combining was questioned as a useful tool for improving student writing. Francis Christensen had already developed his "generative rhetoric of the sentence." He wrote, "We need a rhetoric of the sentence that will do more than combine the ideas of primer sentences. We need one that will generate ideas" (Christensen, 1978). He opposed sentence combining, which he labeled as a mere exercise in syntactics that did not necessarily lead to mature writing. For him, the hallmark of maturity in writing was the inclusion of free or non-restrictive modifiers at the ends of sentences. It is most unfortunate that Christensen did not live to see the development of SCE's that encouraged the use of free modifiers.

Critics who opposed sentence combining insisted that SCE's "may have an adverse effect on the writing of some students. It may encourage the production of excessively long, awkward and error-laden T-units" (Crowhurst, 1983).

Despite the criticisms and cautions, sentence combining flourished in classrooms at all levels of instruction, with uneven results, from the early seventies on. As claims of success mounted, there seemed to be fewer and fewer reported experiments that showed no writing improvement or writing losses. A small sampling of the studies follows.

Sentence Combining and Students with Low Abilities

Ron Evans and others (1988) reported that sentence-combining research with sixth-grade and twelfth-grade students as well as with college juniors confirmed the bond between syntactic constructions in reading and writing. Results indicated that sentence-combining instruction most influenced the reading and writing development of students with low abilities.

> In general, younger students or still-developing students will register the greatest gains in T-unit growth by understanding and using direct statements, placing modifiers and inferring meanings, and, finally, by using subordination and understanding main ideas. These parallels between emergent readers and writers involve the increasing use and understanding of subordinate clauses and phrases together with the increasing use and understanding of noun clauses and phrases . . . (Evans, 1988)

Reaching the English as a Second Language Student (ESL)

Working with English as a Second Language (ESL) students, Husnu Enginarlar developed *SC plus*, which involves "both sentence combining and ordering jumbled sentences." I have already discussed this approach in Chapter 3.

Reviewing the research literature on the teaching of writing to ESL students, Jeffrey Brant concludes that "although the available research fails to take into account the accuracy with which students use SC skills, enough evidence has been collected to indicate that SC can be effective in helping both native-English-speaking and ESL students use more complex syntax" (Brant, 1989).

A Powerful Tool Throughout the Composing Process

Harold E. Nugent reported that sentence combining is a powerful tool and can be used effectively throughout the composing process.

> A study of one student's use of this integrated approach shows that it provides the writer with a method to move effectively through the various stages of the composing process. Using sentence combining during both the exploring and clarifying that occur throughout the composing process can contribute to more efficient composing and subsequently to more effective communication. (Nugent, 1983)

Reducing Apprehension about Writing

Mary Ann Tighe discovered that sentence combining can be used effectively to reduce student writing apprehension. Scores from the WAT (Writing Apprehension Test) posttest indicated that thirteen of the sixteen students improved their scores and were less apprehensive about writing.

> Results showed that students wrote more in their later essays, suggesting a greater willingness to commit themselves on paper. Sentence combining exercises from workbooks did not seem to improve writing skills. Finally analysis revealed that students' later essays were superior to their earlier ones, suggesting that students' overall writing skills had improved. (Tighe, 1987)

Building Vocabulary and Helping Punctuation

"...a variety of sentence pattern exercises and sentence combining lessons based on the students' own writing can be used to augment, challenge, and improve students' writing skills and *vocabulary* [emphasis mine]."(Jordan, 1990)

"Sentence combining is a useful vehicle for teaching punctuation because it creates situations in which students must use punctuation to make sentences. It brings the making and the marking together." (Schafer, 1988)

Word Processing

According to Roberta Young, sentence combining is not only still used but has also "made the transition from paper and pencil into the age of word processing without missing a beat."

> The application of sentence-combining techniques into our students' writing has been dramatic and exciting. We know that sentence combining has met its ideal vehicle in the word processor as we watch students coordinate and subordinate ideas, chop out the 'deadwood,' and skillfully revise their own sentences, happily cutting and pasting to add, delete, or rearrange words. (Young, 1989)

Improving Reading Comprehension

Donald Neville and Evelyn Searls have conducted three major studies related to the effects of SCE's on reading comprehension. In their 1985 report, they said that "sentence-combining has been found to be an effective means of improving writing performance; the research evidence for the effect of sentence-combining on reading comprehension is not as definitive" (Neville and Searls, 1985). In 1988 they reported on thirty-four studies and reached the following conclusion:

> Sentence-combining training appeared to have the greatest effect: (a) on all measures of reading comprehension when the training was conducted in the elementary grades, and (b) on cloze tests, rather than standardized reading tests, when these two types of measures were compared across all grade levels. These conclusions were modified in some instances by relationships with four other variables: the length of the treatment, the type of practice . . . who delivered the treatment, and the treatment that was delivered. (Searls and Neville, 1988)

For their 1991 report they reviewed twenty-four studies and concluded:

> This meta-analysis did support our earlier finding that sentence-combining training in the elementary grades increased reading comprehension more than such training delivered in higher grades.

> There is research evidence to support the existence of steady developmental increments in children's ability to understand syntactic structures until about age 13, at which time this type of linguistic knowledge appears to stabilize. (Neville and Searls, 1991)

In 1985, Joseph J. Comprone identified three stages of research relative to sentence combining. "Early studies indicated little or no correlation between practice in sentence combining and the improvement of students' overall writing abilities." In the middle stage, less attention was paid to "grammar-bound" methods of sentence combining.

> The studies . . . produced some positive results: students' sentences often became generally longer and more textured, had more embeddings in more complex forms, and had generally fewer mistakes in usage or predication. But neither O'Hare nor other researchers doing similar studies could establish a clear relationship between writing that contained more syntactically fluent and correct prose and the effects that writing had on audiences. (Comprone, 1985)

In the third stage, researchers began focusing on what sentence combining could do within the total writing process. William Strong "first gave pedagogical attention to what has come to be called 'whole discourse' sentence combining in which completed sentences are broken back into kernels that are then recombined, without signals, according to voice and theme" (Comprone, 1985).

Summary

Even before, and while, Comprone announced his three stages of research, fourth and fifth stages of research relative to sentence combining were emerging in the literature. Neville and Searls, as noted above, focused their attention on reviews of research relative to the effects of SCE's on reading comprehension. With a fourth stage, teachers and researchers broadened the scope of SCE's and reported the following:

- Increases in syntactic fluency of students in secondary, and college classrooms (see summaries of research in chapter 1, in this chapter, and in the annotated bibliography).
- Improvement of the story writing quality of severely behaviorally disordered students (Rousseau, 1985).
- Improvement of the writing of elementary school children with learning disabilities (Nutter, 1984).
- Increases in syntactic fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension of ESL students at various levels of instruction (Brant, 1989; Enginarlar, 1994; Sanborn, 1987; Singleton, 1983).
- Development of the vocabulary of students at all levels of instruction (Briggs, 1983; Jordan, 1990; Ryder, 1985).
- Successful instruction in the punctuation of sentences (Schafer, 1988).
- Development of exercises to improve the syntactic maturity and mechanics of future technical writers (Rosner, 1982).

Like the fourth stage, the fifth stage in sentence-combining research began before Comprone's article was published. This is the most exciting development in SCE's because the focus is on the total writing process. Teachers and researchers have developed SCE's which prove that the exercises can be used not only to increase syntactic maturity but to help students make rhetorical choices. Designed to help students write for audiences, the exercises lead students to revise, to combine and decombine (deconstruct) sentences into entire paragraphs, and to produce discourse, including argumentation (Elbow, 1985; Enginarlar, 1994; Gebhardt, 1985; Hillocks, 1987; Phelps, 1987; Stratman, 1985; Strong, 1985).

Sentence combining is far from being new, and it is far from being obsolete. As teachers search for methods to help their students improve reading, writing, and analytical skills, they will return to SCE's or discover them. It is a strategy with too much promise to be denied.

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Annotated Bibliography of Related Resources in the ERIC Database

ERIC Resources for Sentence Combining. There is a special ERIC annotated bibliography on sentence combining available to purchasers of this book. You can find it at the following website:

http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/bks/improve.html

Annotated Bibliography of Related Resources in the ERIC Database

Besser, Mary Pamela. "Sentence Combining: A Model for Correcting Fragmentary Absolutes in Basic Writing Students' Essays." *Exercise Exchange*, v30 n2 p30-32 Spring 1985.

Presents sentence-combining exercises that can help basic writing students to produce correct surface-structure transformations in writing.

Brant, Jeffrey K. "Sentence Combining in the Secondary ESL Classroom—A Review of the Research Literature." 1989. 14pp. [ED307 811]

An overview of the research literature reviews studies on the effectiveness of sentence combining (SC) exercises in helping English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students integrate their knowledge of grammar into their writing. In the 1960s, Kellog Hunt published a series of articles that explored the relationship between SC and writing skills. Researchers, since the 1960s, have explored this relationship and have found that SC exercises contribute to accelerated syntactic growth. Research in SC thus far has focused on the remedial college-aged native speaker of English, and a point of debate concerns whether or not this research is generalizable to second language students. Both non-ESL and ESL-based studies on the effectiveness of SC in developing writing skills are discussed. The overview of the research literature concludes that although the available research fails to take into account the accuracy with which students use SC skills, enough evidence has been collected to indicate that SC can be effective in helping both native-English-speaking and ESL students use more complex syntax.

Brown, Earl B., Jr. and Margaret C. Brown. "Sentence Combining as a Practical Diagnostic Tool." 1983. 27pp. [ED247 583]

Writing samples as diagnostic measurement tools have many variables that the instructor must control—time is a factor, and often the

instructor needs more than one sample to fairly evaluate student writing ability. One method for better predicting the exact nature of students' writing problems is sentence combining. For sentence combining to be considered a direct measure of writing, it must be open (unsignaled)—which is thought by some theorists to mimic the writing process—and whole-discourse so that students have a concept around which to fit the given kernels as well as context in which to understand each kernel. Their revision of the open, whole-discourse exercise demonstrates their understanding of the writing process since they must rely on composing (augmenting the given idea), revising, (including transforming, embedding, chaining, and deleting), and editing (including copying skills and the solving of usage problems encountered in the revising stage). Other advantages include lower student apprehension because content is provided and they base their revision choices on attempts to create consciousness in the audience, to reveal empathy, to establish distance between the writer and audience, and to place complex material at the end of a sentence. Overall, sentence combining gives students a fair chance to demonstrate their skills, while the limitation of possible choices makes evaluation easy for the instructor.

Canfield, Carole C. and James Noel Wilmoth. "Teaching English in Open Admissions Environments of Higher Education: A Context for Contemporary Practice." 1989. 47pp. [ED310 396]

This paper examines the conflict going on within the community of English instructors concerning the value of instruction in traditional grammar and the past and present effect of certain historical processes and the forces which shaped those processes on the techniques and methodologies of English instruction. The paper discusses the open and widely publicized philosophical struggle which erupted in the 1960s and 1970s between those who consider the teaching of traditional grammar a complete waste of time, those who consider traditional grammar indispensable to the teaching of English composition, and those whose attitudes concerning traditional grammar represent positions between these

two viewpoints. The paper argues that, as a result of this conflict, the currently evolving techniques of English instruction have the potential to affect the teaching of developmental English at the community college level. The paper identifies these techniques as: (1) transformational generative grammar and its derived auxiliary, sentence-combining; (2) process orientation with emphasis on composing and cognition (as distinguishable from the traditional focus on product); (3) reactionary measures against certain methodologies labeled traditional grammar, representing a position somewhere between a reluctant acceptance and a mild condemnation of grammar as a tool of composition instruction. (Thirty-one references are attached.)

Cotton, Kathleen. "Teaching Composition: Research on Effective Practices. Topical Synthesis No. 2 School Improvement Research Series II." 1988. 14pp. [ED296 343]

A synthesis of research on teaching composition and on effective schooling, this report reviewed 36 documents to present findings on: writing as a process; instructional practices; instructional modes; and teacher training. As the major finding from the research the report identifies higher student achievement when the teaching approach emphasizes writing as a process (involving stages of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publication) rather than writing as a product. The report reviews research on the effectiveness of practices used in teaching writing, involving grammar instruction, sentence combining, providing a language-rich environment, teacher and peer evaluation, frequency and amount of writing, sequenced writing, models, writing across the curriculum, and word processing. Three instructional modes were discussed in the report along with their effectiveness: the presentational mode; the natural process mode; and the environmental mode. In general, the composition research reviewed in the report corroborates the general effective schooling research; what works in a general way also works in this specific curricular area. Thirty-nine annotated references conclude the report.

Crowhurst, Marion. "Sentence Combining: Maintaining Realistic Expectations," *College Composition and Communication*, v34 n1 p62-72 February 1983.

Examines research studies that provide a useful basis for assessing what teachers may realistically expect from sentence combining. Divides those expectations into two categories: those relating to increased syntactic fluency and those relating to the improvement of quality writing.

Enginarlar, Husnu. "Sentence Combining Plus: A New Use for an Old Technique." *ELT-Journal;* v48 n3 pp.214-24. July 1994. [EJ493 146]

This article proposes a modified version of traditional sentence combining (SC) exercises for use in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes. Called SC Plus, this technique involves sentence combining, ordering these sentences into a meaningful text, and editing and revising the constructions initially used in the combining process. (25 references)

Evans, Ron, and Others. "The Effects of Sentence Combining Instructions on Controlled and Free Writing and on Scores for Standardized Tests of Sentence Structure and Reading Comprehension." 1986. 20pp. [ED269 739]

A series of studies was conducted to explore three trends that have emerged from sentence combining research: (1) students with lower abilities in sentence combining and reading comprehension tend to register higher gains in both areas as a result of sentence combining instruction; (2) the broader the range of any student's sentence combining strategies, the better he or she will do in reading comprehension; and (3) specific syntactic constructions or combining transformations are indigenous to identifiable chronological stages of development. Subjects in the studies were 30 college juniors at The University of West Florida and 71 twelfth-grade and 30 sixth-grade students in the panhandle region of Florida. Results indicated that sentence combining instruction most influenced the reading and writing development of students with low abilities in these areas, that the integration of traditional and transformational sentence

combining strategies influenced high school students just as dramatically as exclusive instruction in sentence combining, and that sentence combining most sensitively distinguished between measured gains among the reading and writing skills of students who began such instruction with the lowest skills. Overall, the findings confirmed the bond between syntactic constructions in reading and writing. Two pages of references and three tables of findings conclude the document.

Evans, Ron, and others. "The Effects of Sentence-Combining Instructions on Writing and on Standardized Test Scores," *Journal of Educational Research*, v82 n1 1988.

This article discusses findings from three studies investigating the effect of special instruction in sentence-combining on reading comprehension and writing skills. Results indicate significant gains among younger or still-developing students and focused gains among older students.

Frank, Marcella. "Using Sentence-Combining to Teach Sentence Structure." 1993. 10pp. [ED366 208]

This paper describes a demonstration of a totally integrated discovery procedure to present sentence-combining practice. This practice makes students aware not only of the complex structures but of the usage and style related to each structure. Guidelines for the execution of the practice include: (1) the use of a sequence by the teacher, (2) use of semantic relationships as a basic criterion for the combinations, (3) use of sentences in the practice that might naturally be used separately within each group that is to be combined, (4) incorporation within the practice of an awareness of sentence faults, and (6) integration within the practice of grammatical terminology. A detailed description of the demonstration is offered and the combination of sentences is appended. (Contains 8 references.)

Freedman, Aviva. "Sentence Combining: Some Questions." 1985. 15pp. [ED267 602]

An examination of the reasons behind the strong evidence that practice in sentence combining leads to overall superiority in writing began with the development of a more precise syntactic instrument than had been used previously and a new set of criteria for rhetorical analysis which focused on unity, organization, succinctness, and cohesiveness. A measure of the cognitive dimensions of the text that define the degree to which the writer abstracts from primary data was also used. These instruments were used to re-analyze writing samples from a previous study. The rhetorical and cognitive analyses revealed that sentence combining does seem to develop or enhance certain skills that transfer to the level of discourse and result in more unified, organized, coherent, and concise writing. Whether that phenomenon represents real cognitive development or creation of a set of useful habits remained unclear. However, sentence combining did not seem to develop the ability or inclination to ascend to higher levels of abstracting. Further investigation by direct classroom observation, comparison of achievement in programs with and without instruction in sentence combining, and use of cognitive tests and procedures to determine the occurrence and extent of actual cognitive changes during writing instruction are recommended.

Fusaro, Joseph A. "A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Sentence-Combining on Reading Comprehension." *Reading Improvement*, v30 n4 pp. 228-31 Winter 1993.

Reports that a meta-analysis of the effects of sentence-combining on reading comprehension (which compared the mean effect sizes with zero) affirmed the congeniality of sentence-combining with cloze tests but not with standardized tests.

Glimps, Blanche E. "Teaching Language Skills to Culturally Different Handicapped Children." 1987. 13pp. [ED 288 337]

Controversy exists as to the specific approach to use in teaching

language arts skills to culturally and linguistically different children who speak non-standard English. Three primary approaches involve eradicating, maintaining, or expanding the home language systems of such children. In the expansion approach, children are taught to use standard English in appropriate context while respecting and maintaining their home language or dialect. The role of the teacher is important in helping these children learn to interpret written and oral forms of standard English. The teacher should make an assessment of the cultural and linguistic diversity within their classrooms and should be speech models for children. Specific strategies can be implemented to assist children in building language facility. These include: (1) using the language experience approach; (2) using pictures to build a visual-auditory association; (3) reading stories to students; (4) using techniques such as expansions, sentence building, sentence combining, and transformation to manipulate oral sentences; and (5) integrating language instruction within other academic areas.

Hamilton, Robert L. "Is Implicational Generalization Unidirectional and Maximal? Evidence from Relativization Instruction in a Second Language." *Language-Learning*; v44 n1 pp. 123-57 March 1994.

Analyses of sentence combination data from 33 adult learners of English as a Second Language instructed in sentence combination tasks yielded inconclusive results as to whether implicational generalization (IG) is unidirectional to hierarchy levels implicated by the instructed level. The results suggest that IG is clearly not uniformly maximal to all such implicated levels.

Heise, Lori L. "The Effects of Writing on Elementary School Students' Reading Comprehension." 1988. 40pp. [ED302 854]

To help elementary school teachers decide whether writing is beneficial to their students' comprehension, and if it is, which activities are the most effective, a study examined research which dealt with whether the writing performed by elementary school students helps them

to comprehend better their own and others' written works. Included are 33 annotations in three areas: (1) studies showing the correlations between students' abilities to write and to comprehend; (2) studies on how writing exercises undertaken before or after reading another author's text affects children's comprehension; and (3) studies about the effects that written works created by the students themselves proves their comprehension. Findings conclude that examination of these students proves that elementary school students' writing abilities and the amount of writing they performed were highly correlated with their reading comprehension performances; studies on mapping showed it to be significantly more beneficial to comprehension than other study skills or lessons from basal readers; research conducted on the sentence-combining method demonstrated that this technique was superior in the improvement of the comprehension of elementary school students over other methods of instruction; both summarizing and outlining proved to be beneficial to elementary school students' comprehension; and students improved their comprehension when they wrote their own stories. (A glossary is included, and 41 references are attached.)

Holzman, Michael. "Scientism and Sentence Combining," *College Composition and Communication*, v34 n1 p73-79 February 1983.

Examines the trend toward "scientism" or applying a quantifiable methodology for its own sake to research on sentence combining. Argues that sentence combining is only a tool and not a suitable curriculum for composition instruction and cautions against using social scientific methodologies in essentially humanistic disciplines.

Huems, Ann. "Computer Instruction on Sentence Combining." 1982. 2pp. [ED239 580]

This description of an interactive instructional computer program in sentence combining for upper elementary and middle school students begins by summarizing the content of the program, which focuses on the instructional technique in which students are given two or more short

simple sentences to combine into one longer, complex and/or compound sentence. An outline of the four lessons presented by the program—coordinate predicates, coordinate adverbs and predicate adjectives, coordinate direct objects and predicate nominatives, and three kernel sentences containing syntactic structures presented in the first three parts—is followed by a description of the structure of the individual lessons, including branching that occurs in response to student answers and the procedures that terminate the program. A discussion of some of the problems involved in developing highly interactive instruction for teaching composition on a microcomputer, and a list of nine references conclude the paper.

Johnson, Karen E. "Cognitive Strategies and Second-Language Writers: A Re-Evaluation of Sentence-Combining,." *Journal of Second Language Writing*, v1 n1 pp61-75. 1992.

Analysis of the think-aloud protocols used by advanced-level (n=9) English-as-second-Language writers used in completing sentence-combining tasks showed that they engaged in such strategies as restating content, constructing meaning, higher- and lower-level planning, and evaluating the appropriateness of constructions, but not attending to aspects of cohesion. (35 references)

Jordan, Edwina. "Where Have All the Semicolons Gone?" 1990. 4pp. [ED326 886]

Most students today have been reared on television and have had only slight brushes with the parts of grammar. Nevertheless, a variety of sentence pattern exercises and sentence combining lessons based on the students' own writing can be used to augment, challenge, and improve students' writing skills and vocabulary. In the first exercise, students receive a Xerox copy of one or two drafts of their fellow students' writing. Each student then counts the number of words in each sentence of a paragraph and underlines the subject and verb of each sentence: the student then rewrites and combines two short sentences using

conjunctions, semicolons, or colons. In the second exercise, each student rewrites at least three sentences in a different paragraph and indicates which is his/her worst rewritten sentence. Students work in teams to help each other rewrite the poorly rewritten sentences. If class time permits, the students then rewrite the entire paragraph. This series of exercises helps students learn more vocabulary and to use those semicolons and colons which seem to have disappeared down the television tubes.

Laframboise, Kathryn L. "The Effects of Sentence-Combining Using Word Processing Technology on the Reading Comprehension and Writing Fluency of Low-Achieving Fourth Grade Students." 1989. 19pp. [ED302 845]

A study is in progress (with posttesting planned for April 1989), which examines whether word processing enhances the particular benefits of sentence-combining practice on the reading comprehension and writing fluency of low-achieving intermediate students. Subjects are 80 low-achieving fourth grade students from a Florida school district, randomly assigned to one of three levels of treatment. The first experimental treatment group is participating in teacher-directed lessons on sentence-combining with independent practice on data files with a word processing program. The second experimental treatment group is receiving the same lessons and exercises, but the independent practice is on worksheets. A control group forms the third group. A clinical study component entails a more in-depth analysis of students' writing and oral retelling of stories. Results will be collected from reading and writing measures, to include written retelling of stories using silent film prompts, two cloze tests, and audiotapes of story retelling. The clinical study component will be reported by means of narrative descriptions and descriptive statistics. The hypotheses for this research predict that the two experimental treatment groups will score significantly higher than the control group in writing fluency. (One table, of types of date to be collected and the manner in which it will be reported, is included. Twenty-two references are attached.)

Melvin, Mary P. "The Implication of Sentence Combining for the Language Arts Curriculum." 1983. 14pp. [ED238 021]

Sentence combining can act as a corrective for the large number of language arts lessons and activities that emphasize errors. Based on familiar sentence patterns, sentence combining provides models of effective language use and encourages students to examine and try more expressive and interesting styles of speaking and writing. Sentence combining activities can help teach many skills and concepts in the language arts curriculum. In addition to providing extensive practice in creating sentence structures, sentence combining can help students develop effective paragraphs. For this, kernel sentences are combined into more complex sentences and written in a sequence. Exercises involving several main ideas lead to practice in identifying and writing multiple sentences. Creative writing can be introduced through the expansion of sentences. In these exercises, the students are given a basic sentence and asked to make it tell more or sound more interesting by the addition of words and ideas. Sentence combining not only provides a content for writing, it also encourages the use of common vocabulary for discussion of writing structure. More than developing skills in recognizing and correcting errors, sentence combining emphasizes student production of appropriate and interesting sentences.

Morenberg, Max. "Come Back to the Text Ag'in, Huck Honey!" 1992. 10pp. [ED355 557]

Has the new emphasis on process versus product led instructors to teach that the writing process is everything and the product, the finished paper, of no importance? This is a lesson that not even the most orthodox believer in writing process methodology would support. The process and the product are, in fact, mutually linked, rather than mutually exclusive. Many teachers embraced "process pedagogy" partly because it freed them of necessity of teaching grammar. And, the other sort of traditional grammar teaching generally associated with instruction in composition has never been shown to improve student writing. With sentence

combining, however, instructors can use grammar to teach writing. Sentence combining exercises enable students to learn about the process a writer might face in manipulating a text and—at the same time—learn about the process a writer goes through in creating text.

Studies show that practice with sentence combining makes students better writers. Such an exercise can even be used without reference to any grammatical terminology in a process oriented class. It should be possible to bring together lessons about grammar and literature, process and product, and more consistently use the relationship between reading and writing to make students aware of how sentences in literature work and then ask them to create similar sentences in their own writing.

Echoing Jim, teachers who believe in this possibility can call out to teachers swimming in the dangerous currents of thinking about process versus product, "Come back to the text ag'in, Huck honey."

Morenberg, Max. "Process/Schmocess: Why Not Combine a Sentence or Two?" 1990. 14pp. [ED319 040]

Though popular in the late 70s and early 80s, the instructional technique of sentence combining attracts little support today, even thought practice has proven that teaching the processes of combining and expanding sentences can enhance syntactic maturity. A student writer who is made aware of the expectations of form will be prompted to generate more richly textured content. Despite the suggestion of some critics, there is no necessary antithesis between the process (form) and product (content) approaches to writing instruction. Like the writing-process methodology, the form-based sentence-combining approach is inherently student centered, as it builds upon students' innate knowledge of language. At the same time, the approach gives both the teacher and student textual matters to discuss. Properly used, sentence combining can reestablish the relationship between form and content in a writing process class.

Neville, Donald D. and Evelyn F. Searls. "A Meta-Analytic Review of the Effect of Sentence Combining on Reading Comprehension," *Reading*

Research and Instruction, v31 n1 p63-76 Fall 1991.

Extends an earlier exploratory study of the effects of sentence-combining on reading achievement by updating the pool of studies and using meta-analysis as a vehicle for integration. Finds that only grade levels produced significant differences; sentence-combining had a greater effect at the elementary level than at the high school or college levels.

Nugent, Harold E. "Sentence Combining and Organizing Principles." 1983. 16pp. [ED294 170]

Sentence combining is a powerful tool for structuring information and can be used effectively throughout the composing process. The teaching of composition can integrate into the composing process a number of concepts, including the use of heuristics, intellectual strategies, organizing principles, and sentence combining. A useful model for the composing process is a protocol analysis developed by Linda Flower and John Hayes (1980) which has four operations: assigning, translating, and reviewing. The use of heurisitics is designed to help the writer retrieve information he or she already know, to point to information not known to be available by reading and observing, and finally, to aid the writer in discovering organizing principles for the paper. The heuristic procedure consists of a worksheet that includes setting, order, and change, cause-effect, and focus. Together the instructor and student compile the linguistic cues and connectives that signal to the reader the logical relationships of ideas. A study of one students' use of this effectively through the various stages of the composing process. Using sentence combining during both the exploring and clarifying that occur throughout the composing process can contribute to more efficient composing and subsequently to more effective communication. (Four notes and nine references are appended.)

Nutter, Norma; and Stephen P. Safran. "Sentence Combining and the Learning Disabled Student." 1983. 21pp. [ED252 994]

Theory and research indicated that sentence combining exercises (SCE's) might be effective for improving the writing of learning disabled

(LD) pupils. Seven college seniors in special education were trained to implement SCE's naturalistically in tutoring 13 LD pupils in grades 1-6 over a 10 week period, with a control group of 8 seniors tutoring 11 LD pupils. Pre- and postwriting samples, obtained using standardized drawings as stimuli, were analyzed for mean number of words, mean number of words per T-unit. While no significant differences were present for the control group, the experimental group made significant gains on mean number of words ($p<.05$) and mean number of words per T-unit ($p<.001$). No evidence was found that the experimental group either overapplied their SCE instruction or created errors in new syntactic structures. Limitations of the study were discussed. However, the size of the effects obtained and the fact that data corroborated previous studies with other populations indicated that instructional use of SCE's with LD pupils should be pursued.

Pelton, Claire L. "The Teaching of Writing: No Time for Bromides," *Teacher Education Quarterly*, v10 n3 p1-8 Summer 1983.

Techniques for teaching writing should emphasize revision and editing, practice in sentence combining, and exposure of students to fine prose. To encourage good writing in all subjects, teachers should be trained to read students' essays holistically, paying attention to style as well a content.

Phelps, Terry D. "A Life Sentence for Student Writing: The Cumulative Sentence," *Journal of Teaching Writing*, v6 n2 p60-71 Fall 1987.

Suggests that work with the cumulative sentence can have an immediate and profound impact on student writing in the areas of grammar, organization, and specificity. Finds the use of the cumulative sentence helpful as a sentence-combining technique for several other aspects of composition and grammar.

Reutzel, D. Ray; Jimmie D. Merrill. "Writing With Basals: A Sentence Combining Approach to Comprehension." 1985. 13pp. [ED263 612]

Sentence combining techniques can be used with basal readers to help develop writing skills. The first technique is addition, characterized by using the connecting word "and" to join two or more sentences together. The second technique is called "embedding," and is characterized by putting parts of two or more base sentences together without the use of "and." The third technique is "coordination," which joins two equally important base sentences together using one of four grammatical elements: coordinating conjunctions, a semicolon, a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb, or a correlative conjunction. The final technique, "subordination," involves combining two or more base sentences to emphasize a dependence of one upon the other, by using a subordinating conjunction, relative connectors, or prepositions. There are five signaling devices that can be used to direct students' attention to key points in the text where sentence combining can occur: arrows, umbrella signals, margin signals, footnote signals, and boxes. (Examples of the four techniques are included in the paper, and the appendixes contain lists of coordinating and correlative conjunctions, as well as conjunctive adverbs, and examples of basal story excerpts using the signaling devices and the sentence combining techniques.)

Roberts, Claudette M. and Barbara A. Boggase. "Non-Intrusive Grammar in Writing." 1992. 20pp. [ED348 684]

Since introducing a grammar unit can be daunting and frustrating for both teachers and students, a collaborative unit for a 10th-grade class was planned that would satisfy an administrative requirement but also maintain the integrity of the writing program. The unit was planned by developing an approach of non-intrusive grammar instruction at the computer based upon the work of Rei R. Noguchi. Noguchi's position derives from the polarized positions of the programmer instructors on the ones side who place so much emphasis on mechanical errors that they "'red-ink' student writing to a fatal hemorrhage" and the "anti-grammar" teachers on the other side who basically ignore grammar mistakes in favor of content. Noguchi emphasizes the use of "operational" definitions by tapping the

unconscious knowledge that all users of English already possess. By reading even the most preposterous student samples from a semantic perspective, almost all of them reveal, for example, an awareness of the concept of sentences. A sentence combining technique using a "matrix" and "insert" to produce a desired "result" showed that most students were able to identify incomplete or unclear sentence structures. The use of grammatical "tag" and "yes-no question" techniques also has proven effective in training students about sentence boundaries. Research results from the unit analysis bear this conclusion out: clearly, students had become more fluent at observing sentence boundaries throughout the unit. Part of the success can be attributed to the use of computers. Finally, student evaluations from the unit demonstrate that the objectives of the unit were satisfactorily achieved. (Three figures exhibiting the results of the study are attached.)

Rose, Shirley K "Down from the Haymow: One Hundred Years of Sentence Combining," *College English*, v45 n5 p483-91 September 1983.

Examines the use of sentence combining as a bridge between grammar and rhetoric during the past 100 years.

Rosner, Mary. "Sentence-Combining in Technical Writing: An Editing Tool," *Technical Writing Teacher*, v9 n2 p100-107 Winter 1982.

Describes the development and use of sentence combining exercises at a midwestern university and presents the results of a test to determine the effects of exercises on syntactic maturity and mechanics.

Rosner, Mary and Terri Paul. "Using Sentence Combining in Technical Writing Classes," *Technical Writing Teacher*, v10 n1 p35-40 Fall 1982.

Describes typical sentence, paragraph, and discourse level sentence combining exercises using material appropriate for technical writers.

Rousseau, Marilyn K. and Claire L. Poulson. "Using Sentence-Combining To Teach the Use of Adjectives in Writing to Severely Behaviorally Disordered Students." 1985. 25pp. [ED342 153]

Three academically deficient and behavior disordered male students, 9 to 13 years of age, participated in a treatment program to improve their written composition skills. A multiple-baseline across-subjects was used to analyze the effects of three treatment procedures on the number and variety of adjectives per T-unit (minimal terminable unit) written by the students. Treatment 1 was simple instructions, descriptive praise, and points for use of adjectives; Treatment 2 added sentence-combining instructional materials; and Treatment 3 added descriptive praise and points for use of different adjectives. Treatment 1 alone was sufficient to systematically increase the number and variety of adjectives per T-unit. Furthermore, the mean number of all words per T-unit increased by 4 to 5 grade levels for two students, bringing them above grade level. Evaluations of story quality showed marked improvement for all three students. (21 references)

Rubin, Donald L. "Adapting Syntax in Writing to Varying Audiences As a Function of Age and Social Cognitive Ability," *Journal of Child Language*, v9 n2 p497-510 June 1982.

Examines the effects of audience adaptation and social cognitive ability on the syntactic strategies employed by four different age groups in the writing of persuasive discourse.

Sanborn, Jean. "Obstacles and Opportunities: Sentence Combining in Advanced ESL," *Journal of Basic Writing*, v6 n2 p60-71 Fall 1987.

Explains how sentence-combining exercises can improve advanced English as a second language (ESL) students' writing.

Singleton, Carl. "Sentence Combining for the Intermediate ESL Student." 1983. 12pp. [ED267 622]

While vocabulary is the concern of beginning students of English as

a second language (ESL) and essays are the focus of advanced students, syntax is the domain of the intermediate course, with an emphasis on sentence combining. One method divides the course into four segments: (1) using, varying, and rearranging connectors; (2) ordering thoughts in English; (3) choosing and varying styles; and (4) eliminating faulty constructions. The approach covers small amounts of new information very slowly and thoroughly. The text used is a common one, but most texts with adequate sentence sets for combining would be appropriate, and they need not be designed for ESL. Vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar are handled as supplementary to the central issue of sentence combining, and the jargon presented to the student is limited to what is necessary for the task. At least one writing assignment is required to each week, especially necessary for students who will find themselves in college composition classes. These compositions go through several rewriting stages and sessions of peer criticism.

Sledge, Andrea Celine. "Three Methods of Extending Understanding and Appreciation of Literature: A Review of Research." 1983. 17pp. [ED238 002]

Teaching reading comprehension as a process rather than a product demands new instructional techniques. As the psycholinguistic model of reading suggests, readers use prior knowledge and linguistic competence to confirm, reject, or revise predictions on the text's meaning. Methods increasing readers' consciousness of their role in the comprehension process, therefore, lead to increased reading understanding. Such methods include the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA), exploitation of cognitive dissonance, and sentence combining. DR-TA, which involves (1) generating predictions, (2) creating hypotheses, (3) testing assumptions and purposes, and (4) confirming, rejecting, or revising hypotheses, can enhance literature comprehension as readers learn how wrong expectations are used to produce an effective story. The perception of logical inconsistencies, cognitive dissonance, encourages rethinking of the text, thus promoting the construction of meaning. Sentence combining, which

exercises the memory of function and develops the ability to synthesize, teaches readers that word groups must be treated as meaning units in order to be manipulated successfully. All of these methods are well suited for aesthetic or literary reading.

Steffey, Marda Nicholson. "'Paragraph Building' As a Teaching Tool," *ABCA Bulletin*, v46 n2 p23-26 June 1983.

Discusses a variation of sentence combining exercises that involves separating whole paragraphs into sentences and fragments and asking writing students to put the constituents back together.

Stoddard, Elizabeth Pelton and Joseph S. Renzulli. "Improving the Writing Skills of Talent Poor Students," *Gifted Child Quarterly*, v27 n1 p21-27 Winter 1983.

Sentence combining by itself or teamed with creative thinking activities resulted in higher holistic ratings of writing samples for gifted fifth- and sixth-graders. Results further revealed that the writing quality was significantly higher for sessions within the classroom than for "pull-out" sessions. Four specific educational implications were drawn.

Strong, William. "Creative Approaches to Sentence Combining." 1986. 94pp. [ED274 985]

Summarizing the wealth of recent research on sentence combining as an effective method of teaching students to tighten and vary their written sentences, this booklet provides background information on sentence combining, exploring the basis for the claim that sentence combining enhances sentence writing by drawing on built-in linguistic competence, and arguing for a much broader definition of sentence combining. This section also discusses seven instructional issues concerning the use of sentence combining, and lists ten assumptions that seem to underlie the sentence combining approach. The second half of the booklet outlines many ways to use sentence combining in the writing class. This section first deals with cued sentence combining, of the kind popularized by F.

O'Hare, then shows how open exercises might be introduced and used in a middle school classroom. It also deals with such practical matters as orchestrating in-class projects, handling "mistakes," and creating various types of sentence combining. The focus then shifts to a variation of pattern practice that may help special students, topics such as grammar, usage/mechanics, and sentence economy. Finally the section moves into arenas more explicitly rhetorical: style, recombining, and generative exercises, the problem of context, and analytical activities of different kinds.

Strong, William. "Premises, Premises: New Ways To Think about Sentence Combining." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English. 1990. 20pp. [ED 326 873]

By limiting sentence combining to the arena of syntax and skills, an individual's own thinking is seriously constricted. Any linguistic act is simultaneously two games at once—an 'inner game' of intention and strategy, and an 'outer game' of actual performance. According to this formulation, all language events are intentional, purposeful, and social—a way of personally constructing the world and communicating it (to others). Much of the writing process movement has shown how increased attention to the inner game can result in better outer game performance. Since writing is thinking, more planning should lead to better writing. To date, most sentence combining activities have focused on outer game performance, not on the interplay of intentions and strategy with sentence-level decisions. Frank Smith says that much language learning is vicarious—that to the extent that people are engaged as members of the Literacy Club they are internalizing an enormous array of lessons, without conscious effort or awareness. Certain types of given-language activities —assuming that they stimulate inner game/outer game learning—provide an alternate way to help certain students regain sensitivity to literacy lessons. They support such learning because they engage students collaboratively. (One format for a persuasive writing lesson is included and twelve references are attached.)

Tighe, Mary Ann. "Reducing Writing Apprehension in English Classes." 1987. 18pp. [ED 281 196]

In an effort to reduce student writing apprehension, an informal, in-class study was conducted in a lower-level college writing course at an Alabama university. The 16 students in this course took a Writing Apprehension Test (WAT—pretest) on the first day of class. Throughout the course, all writing was based on student experiences and came from student journals, all assignments were completed in class and reviewed in small groups discussions, and specific criteria from the rating scale used to evaluate student essays were discussed. Late in the course, students exchanged two essays with a partner—one written early in the course and one written late—and evaluated them as peer critics. Students then evaluated their own essays. Findings from these observations and WAT posttest scores indicated that 13 students were less apprehensive about their writing after the course than before it. In addition, results showed that students wrote more in their later essays, suggesting a greater willingness to commit themselves on paper. Sentence combining exercises from workbooks did not seem to improve writing skills. Finally analysis revealed that students' later essays were superior to their earlier ones, suggesting that students' overall writing skills had improved. (The WAT, various instructional and evaluation data, and sample essays are appended.)

Towns, Sanna-Nimtz. "Techniques for Integrating Reading and Writing Instruction in Secondary and Post-Secondary Reading Programs." 1984. 15pp. [ED244 251]

The insight and understanding gained from various discourse models can allow teachers of reading and writing to focus on the many ways reading and writing exercises such as sentence combining and Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of a sentence can assist students in the effective writing of sentences and paragraphs, and can be applied to the reading process so that students can become analytical readers of complex sentences and paragraphs. Christensen's rhetoric of sentences and

paragraphs allow student-writers the possibility of learning to see and create relationships within and between sentences. Sentence combining, on the other hand, allows students to manipulate sentence structures in order to compose more syntactically mature sentences. One useful approach to analyzing complex sentences is to have students practice sentence-combining in reverse; the breakdown of sentences into parts. Another approach is to teach students to understand how Christensen's free modifiers function and how they may function on various levels of a sentence, depending on their structural functions.

Walsh, S. M. "Breakthroughs in Composition Instruction Methods Without Evidence of Tangible Improvements in Students' Composition: When Will Change Come?" 1991. 14pp. [ED336 744]

Throughout the early years of the twentieth century, literacy education was based on the solid understanding of grammar. Yet as early as 1923, empirical data indicated that the link between knowledge of grammar and correct use of English was tenuous at best. Despite formidable evidence, some educators still advocate the use of grammar as a principal form of English language instruction. Noam Chomsky challenged supporters of traditional grammar instruction by advancing an alternative explanation of language development. Better working concepts of sentence length, clause length, and T-units were developed. Sophisticated studies confirmed the legitimacy of sentence combining as a means of developing composition skills. There were further developments in composition research and theory: (1) student composition should be a natural outgrowth of classroom discussions and the reading of literature; (2) students use 2 different approaches to writing, "extensive" and "reflexive"; (3) "free writing" has utility as a composition tool; (4) journal writing can increase the fluency and self awareness of student writers' and (5) theorists and researchers studied the process of writing as well as the product. Yet an expected improvement in writing proficiency scores in the 1980s failed to materialize as composition teachers continued to emphasize grammar and structure at the expense of developing writing

skills. Classroom teacher must be made aware that an extraordinary body of well-documented research has value and can contribute to a better way of teaching writing. There is only one way that students will learn to write and that is by writing.

Whyte, Sarah S. "The Connection of Writing to Reading and Its Effect on Reading Comprehension." 1985. 28pp. [ED278 940]

Research and observations have indicated that there is a connection between reading and writing. This connection has been confirmed through the research of D. Graves, L. Calkins, G. Bissex, and M. Baghban. Cognitive theorists believe that reading and writing involve similar schema structures. Much of the pedagogy and research suggest that the processes of reading and writing are mutually reinforcing and should even be taught together as a common base of meaning. Specific research on how writing affects reading comprehension often focuses on sentence combining. Because vocabulary is crucial to reading comprehension and writing reinforces what students understand orally, dictation is an advocated writing method. Paraphrasing and writing abstracts are also proven methods for increasing reading comprehension. Research on the writing process by P. Femming showed that peer conferencing encourages students to get involved as readers and writers and that the decisions and awareness that grow from this process transfer to reading comprehension, but reading and writing mutually affect learning. Educators should teach reading and writing together within a contextual framework, while research is needed on the effects of writing on reading and reading on writing. (Three pages of references are provided.)

Wilkinson, Phyllis A.; Del Patty. "The Effects of Sentence Combining on the Reading Comprehension of Fourth Grade Students." *Research in the Teaching of English*; v27 n1 February 1993. pp.104-25. [EJ459 185]

Finds that sentence combining practice may have enhanced cohesion knowledge and had a positive effect on general reading comprehension.

Willing, Judith B. "Using Instruction in Sentence Combining to Improve Syntactic Maturity in Student Writing." 1985. 50pp. [ED323 557]

A practicum provided 10th-grade students in 2 English honors classes with direct instruction in sentence combining. The goal of the program was to increase the syntactic complexity of student writing, to have students express more in each sentence. Instruction was approached from different aspects. The students worked with two textbooks on sentence combining. They worked with sentences from the newspaper and a magazine. There were lessons in sentence combining as a means to understand the style of the two textbook authors. Sentence combining was used as a means to encourage substantial revision of essays. Writing an abstract of the research paper was approached through sentence combining. Exercises utilizing different levels of thinking were also included. According to a pretest and posttest measured by T-unit length, students progressed an average of four years during a 10-week period. The attitudes of the students toward writing generally improved. Sixteen references and a bibliography are attached. Appendixes include: a letter from the language arts supervisor, a "T.V. Guide" exercise, an essay on sentence combining strategies keyed to Bloom's learning behaviors, a pretest and posttest, and test results.

Winterowd, W. Ross. "Prolegomenon to Pedagogical Stylistics," *College Composition and Communication*, v34 n1 p80-90 February 1983.

Discusses the underlying theory and pedagogical rationale of sentence combining and of accessibility, the relative ease with which a text can be read.

Wright, Anne. "Computers as Instructional Aids." 1986. 3pp. [ED275 000]

The use of microcomputers as word processors for writing papers is commonplace in English departments, but there are many less well-known uses that English teachers can make of the computer. For example, word processing programs can be used to teach sentence combining. Moving

the text on the screen is very easy, so it is possible to rearrange words or phrases and to discuss the differences these changes make in meaning or sentence flow. Computers are also helpful for demonstrating revision and group composing, with teachers going through the processes with students to help them understand the changes than can easily be manipulated on the screen. While writing research papers, students can prepare a preliminary question outline on the computer, save the outline on disk, and answer the questions as they do their research. Or students and teachers can use a computer unit with both large screen and small screen monitors. The students can watch the large-screen monitor while the teacher types, watching the small screen.

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